

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXV. BRAVO, ANTINOUS!

THE two Pulteneys stayed out, the one to act as judge, the other as timekeeper; and the timekeeper was to give the starting signal by firing a pistol.

In the meanwhile, the eight competitors were ranged side by side, close under the ladies' platform, with the sleeves of their Jerseys rolled up above the elbows, their arms drawn close to their bodies, and their clenched fists pressed against their chests—all lithe and eager-looking, like a pack of greyhounds. Of these, the two tallest and fairest were Saxon Trefalden and Sir Charles Burgoyne. Sir Charles was the handsomer man; but Saxon was a shade the taller, and something more than a shade broader across the shoulders. Well might Miss Hatherton call him the golden-haired Antinous; only that he was Antinous on a grander scale than the famous Antinous of the Capitol—Antinous with herculean possibilities of strength and speed.

With the exception of Lord Castletowers, whose Jersey was of a creamy white, just the tint of his flannel trousers, the young men were each distinguished by the colours of their shirts. Saxon's was striped pink and white; Burgoyne's light blue and white; Vaughan's mauve and white; and so on.

All was ready. The course was clear; the spectators silent; the competitors drawn up, and waiting. Suddenly, the timekeeper threw up his hand, and fired in the air. At the same instant, as if shot from his pistol, the eight runners sprang forward, and the race began.

They had no sooner started than Saxon took the lead, running lightly and steadily, with his head well up, and his curls dancing in the sun. He was obviously putting but little labour into his running, and yet, at the first three or four bounds, he had gained a good ten feet on his companions. Next in order came Castletowers, Vaughan, and Burgoyne, almost level with each other; and close after them, Edward Brandon, whose slightness of make and length of limb enabled him to run tolerably well for a short distance; but whose want of real physique invariably knocked him up at the end of the first three hundred yards. Torrington, Greville, and Pelham Hay brought up the rear. In this order

they ran the first round. At the second turn, however, just as they neared the ladies' platform, Castletowers made a rush to the front, and passed Saxon by some three or four feet. At the same instant, Vaughan and Burgoyne perceptibly increased their pace, widening the space between themselves and the four last at every stride.

And now Brandon, who had for some seconds begun to show symptoms of distress, came suddenly to a stand-still; and, being passed by those in the rear, fell, pale and panting, to the earth.

In the mean while, Saxon had in no wise quickened his pace, nor attempted to regain his lead; but kept on at precisely the same rate throughout the whole of the second round. Just as they were beginning the third, however, and at the very point where Castletowers had made his rush, Saxon, without any apparent effort, bounded ahead, and again left his friend some three yards behind.

Torrington, Greville, and Hay now dropped out of the ranks, one by one, and gave up the contest; leaving only Saxon and Castletowers, Vaughan and Burgoyne, in the race. Presently the two latter went down, but were on their feet again in the twinkling of an eye, and flying on as before.

At the fourth round, Castletowers brought himself up abreast with Saxon. At the fifth, Burgoyne gave in, and Vaughan flagged obviously; but Castletowers again dashed forward, and again secured the lead.

A subdued murmur, that broke now and then into a cheer, ran round the course. Every eye was riveted upon the runners. Every head turned as they turned, and was outstretched to follow them. The ladies rose on the platform, and watched them through their glasses. There were only three now—a white shirt, a pink shirt, and a mauve; but white and pink divided the suffrages of the lookers-on, and nobody cared a straw for mauve.

Again the circuit was nearly completed, and they were approaching the stand. The next round would be the sixth and last. The interest of the moment became intense. The murmur swelled again, and became a shout—hats were waved, handkerchiefs fluttered—even Lady Castletowers leaned forward with a glow of real excitement on her face.

On they came—the Earl first, in his white Jersey, pale as marble, breathing in short heavy

gasps, lips quivering, brows closely knitted, keeping up his lead gallantly, but keeping it by dint of sheer pluck and nervous energy. Saxon next—a little flushed, but light of foot and self-possessed as ever, as fresh apparently as when he first started, and capable of running on at the same steady rate for any number of miles that might be set before him. Vaughan last—coming up very heavily, and full twenty yards in the rear.

"Good Heavens!" cried Miss Hatherton, half beside herself with impatience, "how can he let Lord Castletowers keep the lead?"

"Because he cannot help it," said Olimpia, scornfully triumphant. She had forgotten that Saxon was her chosen knight, and all her sympathies were with the Earl.

"Absurd! he has but to put out a little more speed and he must win. The Earl is nearly . . . There! there! did I not tell you so? Bravo, Antinous!"

They passed the platform; and as they passed, Saxon looked up with an ardent smile, waved his hand to Olimpia, threw up his head like a young war-horse, bounded forward as if the wings were really on his feet, and passed the Earl as easily as a man on horseback passes a man on foot. Till this moment the race, earnest enough for the rest, had been mere play to him. Till this moment he had not attempted to put out his speed, or show what he could do. Now he flashed past the astonished spectators like a meteor. His feet seemed scarcely to touch the turf, his body seemed as if borne upon the air. A great roar of admiration burst from the crowd; and in the midst of the roar, before Lord Castletowers had got over a third of the distance, Saxon had made the sixth round, and passed the winning-post by several feet.

"Won by a hundred and eighty yards," said Pulteney, timekeeper. "Last round thirty-one seconds and a half. By Jove, Sir, though I've seen it myself, I can scarcely believe it!"

Saxon laughed joyously.

"I could have done it almost as easily," said he, "if it had been up-hill all the way."

And what did Olimpia Colonna say to her chosen knight, when he received the prize from her hands, only to lay it the next moment at her feet? Doubtless she remembered in good time that Saxon *was* her chosen knight, and forgot how disloyally her sympathies had strayed from him in the race. Doubtless he greeting had in it something poisonously sweet, subtle, intoxicating—to judge, at least, by the light in his face, as he bowed and turned away.

CHAPTER XXXVI. ELTON HOUSE, KENSINGTON.

MR. ABEL KECKWITCH, with William Trefalden's private address in his pocket-book, felt much as Adrian the Fourth may have felt with haughty Barbarossa prostrate at his feet. He took it for granted that there was some dark secret at the bottom of his master's daily life. He knew quite well that a practical man like

William Trefalden would never take the trouble to surround himself with mystery unless he had something to hide, and to that something Abel Keckwitch believed he now possessed the key. It never occurred to him that William Trefalden might possibly object to let such loquacious stones as copying clerks prate of his whereabouts, for other than criminal reasons. If such an idea had been suggested to him, he would have laughed it to scorn. So, to do him justice, would Mr. Kidd. Both the detective and the lawyer's clerk were too familiar with the dark side of human nature to believe for a moment that systematic mystery meant anything less than undiscovered crime.

So Abel Keckwitch took his master's address home with him, fairly written out in Mr. Nicodemus Kidd's clear business hand, and exulted therein. He was in no haste to act upon the information folded up in that little slip of paper. It was not in his nature to be in haste about anything, least of all about so sweet a dish as revenge. It must be prepared slowly, tasted a morsel at a time, and made to last as long as possible. Above all, it must be carefully considered beforehand from every point of view, and be spoiled by no blunder at starting. So he copied the address into his common-place book, committed it to memory, pondered over it, gloated over it, and fed his imagination on it for days before he proceeded to take any fresh steps in the matter.

"ELTON HOUSE, KENSINGTON."

Such was the address given to him by Mr. Nicodemus Kidd. "Elton House, Kensington;" not a word more—not a word less. It was an address that told nothing—suggested nothing. "Elton Villa" would have bespoke a neat, stuccoed anachronism in the Graeco-Gothic style; "Elton Lodge," a prim modern residence, with gardens, gates, and a carriage-drive; "Elton Cottage," an unassuming little place, shrinking back from the high road, in a screen of lilacs and laburnums; but "Elton House" represented none of these to the mind's eye. "Elton House" might be ancient or modern, large or small, a cockney palace, or a relic of the old court days. There was nothing in its name to assist conjecture in any way. Thus, again, the very suburb was perplexing. Of all districts round about London, there is none so diverse in its characteristics as Kensington—none so old in part, so new in part; so stately here, so squalid there; so of the country countrified in one direction, so of the town towny in another. Elton House might partake of any of these conditions for aught that one could gather from its name.

In short, Mr. Abel Keckwitch turned the address over in his mind much as some people turn their letters over, stimulating their curiosity instead of gratifying it, and spelling out the motto on the seal, instead of breaking it.

At length he resolved to go over to Kensington and reconnoitre the ground. Having come to this determination one Saturday afternoon

(on which day, when practicable, Mr. Trefalden dismissed his clerks at five o'clock), Abel Keckwitch pushed forward with his work; closed the office precisely as St. Dunstan's clock was striking; and, instead of trudging, as usual, direct to Pentonville, turned his face westward, and hailed the first Hammersmith omnibus that came by.

It was a lovely afternoon; warm, sunny, summerlike. Mr. Trefalden's head clerk knew that the Park trees were in all the beauty of their early leafage, and that the air beyond Charing-Cross would be delicious; and he was sorely tempted to take a seat on the roof. But prudence prevailed. To risk observation would be to imperil the very end for which he was working; so, with a sigh, he gave up the air and the sunshine, and took an inside place next the door.

The omnibus soon filled, and, once closely packed, rattled merrily on, till it drew up for the customary five minutes' rest at the White Horse Cellar. Then, of course, came the well-known newsvendor with the evening papers; and the traditional old lady who has always been waiting for the last three-quarters of an hour; and the conductor's vain appeal to the gallantry of gentlemen who will *not* go outside to oblige a lady—would prefer, in fact, to see a dozen ladies boiled first.

This interlude played out, the omnibus rattled on again to the corner of Sloane-street, where several passengers alighted; and thence proceeded at a sober, leisurely rate along the Kensington-road, with the green, broad Park lying all along to the right, and row after row of stately terraces to the left.

"Put me down, conductor," said Mr. Keckwitch, "at the first turning beyond Elton House."

He had weighed every word of this apparently simple sentence, and purposely waited till the omnibus was less crowded, before delivering it. He knew that the Kensington-road, taken from the point where Knightsbridge is supposed to end, up to that other point where Hammersmith is supposed to begin, covers a fair three miles of ground; and he wanted to be set down as near as possible to the spot of which he was in search. But then it was essential that he should not seem to be looking for Elton House, or going to Elton House, or inquiring about Elton House in any way; so he worded his little speech with an ingenuity that was quite masterly as far as it went.

"Elton House, sir?" said the conductor. "Don't know it. What's the name of the street?"

Mr. Keckwitch took a letter from his pocket, and affected to look for the address.

"Ah!" he replied, refolding it with a disappointed air, "that I cannot tell you. My directions only say, 'the first turning beyond Elton House.' I am a stranger to this part of London, myself."

The conductor scratched his ear, looked puzzled, and applied to the driver.

"'Arry," said he. "Know Elton House?" "Elton House?" repeated the driver. "Can't say I do."

"I think I have heard the name," observed a young man on the box.

"I'm sure I've seen it somewhere," said another on the roof.

And this was all the information to be had on the subject.

Mr. Keckwitch's ingenious artifice had failed. Elton House was evidently not to be found without inquiry—therefore inquiry must be made. It was annoying, but there was no help for it. Just as he had made up his mind to this alternative, the omnibus reached Kensington-gate, and the conductor put the same question to the toll-taker that he had put to the driver.

"Davy—know Elton House?"

The toll-taker—a shaggy fellow, with a fur cap on his head and a straw in his mouth—pointed with his thumb over his shoulder, and replied,

"Somewhere down by Slade's-lane, beyond the westry."

On hearing which, Mr. Keckwitch's countenance brightened, and he requested to be set down at Slade's-lane, wherever that might be.

Slade's-lane proved to be a narrow, winding, irregular by-street, leading out from the high road, and opening at the further end upon fields and market-gardens. There were houses on only one side; and on the other, high walls, with tree-tops peeping over, and here and there a side-door.

The dwellings in Slade's-lane were of different degrees of smallness; scarcely two of the same height; and all approached by little slips of front garden, more or less cultivated. There were lodgings to let, evidences of humble trades, and children playing about the gardens and door-steps of most of them. Altogether, a more unlikely spot for William Trefalden to reside in could scarcely have been selected.

Having alighted from the omnibus at the top of this street, Mr. Keckwitch, after a hurried glance to left and right, chose the wall side, and walked very composedly along, taking rapid note of each door that he passed, but looking as stolid and unobservant as possible.

The side-doors were mostly painted of a dull green, with white numerals, and were evidently mere garden entrances to houses facing in an opposite direction.

All at once, just at that point where the lane made a sudden bend to the right and turned off towards the market gardens, Mr. Keckwitch found himself under the shadow of a wall considerably higher than the rest, and close against a gateway flanked by a couple of stone pillars. This gate occupied exactly the corner where the road turned, so that it blunted the angle, as it were, and commanded the lane in both directions. It was a wooden gate—old, ponderous, and studded with iron bosses, just wide enough, apparently, for a carriage to drive through, and many feet higher than it was wide.

In it was a small wicket door. The stone pillars were time-stained and battered, and looked as if they might have stood there since the days when William of Orange brought his Dutch court to Kensington. In one of them was a plain brass bell-handle. On both were painted, in faded and half illegible letters, the words, "Elton House."

THE BACHELORS' STRIKE.

To render modern French marriages what they ought to be—marriages of inclination, instead of hard-bargained money matches*—M. Thévenin proposes a no less sweeping measure than the abolition of the marriage-portion.

He allows that the importance of a dowry is not a matter of to-day. We know the number of camels, oxen, sheep, and servants, which Jacob received as Rebecca's portion. The dowry, therefore, is no new institution; but its antique origin, according to our author, adds nothing to its moral value. No man with a proper sense of his own dignity, can allow it to reckon amongst the considerations which determine his marrying. The male sex, who assume to take the lead, would sink wonderfully in the good opinion entertained of them by the weaker sex, if ladies only reflected seriously on the disreputable side of mercantile marriages.

Remembering the profound respect for money in which we are trained by society, what deference can a woman have for a husband who derives his own position and supremacy solely from the dowry she brings him? Wealthy heiresses, full of pretensions justified by universal prejudice, are in general wantonly capricious and insupportable as wives. The wise man, therefore, will shout from the house-tops, "It is shameful to sell your independence and dignity, to risk your happiness and honour, for a money payment, however handsome. Marry to be happy, and not to be rich. If you can combine riches with happiness, there is no harm done; it is so much the better. But never forget the proverb, 'A contented mind is far before wealth.' Put no faith in opulent couples who jingle their money to stifle their remorse; enjoy yourself as well as you can, until it please Providence to send you an income; but never, never, buy it at the expense of tranquillity, happiness, dignity, and conscience.

"Some time ago, they played at the Gymnase a piece called 'Un beau Mariage,' 'A capital Match,' by Emile Augier. Try to see it or to read it. You will there behold the galley-slave's life led by an honest young fellow, whose only crime was believing in the generosity of a great lady whose richly-portioned daughter he had married. At the fourth or fifth act, the much-despised husband has acquired, by his talent, a high position. The noble mother-in-law then runs after him, and reads her recantation. It

is a sad reality. Moral marriage should never be a speculation."

It is wonderful that those who most stand up for the dowry, do not remark that it is the principal if not the only cause of the diminution of marriages. At the present day, luxury has made such strides, that many people—and they deserve no pity for their folly—prefer superfluities to necessities. Consequently, many an heiress, who was considered rich some years ago, is now despised by speculators as virtually portionless. The idea is perfectly logical. If the young lady, by her luxurious tastes, her expensive habits, threaten to absorb the interest of her portion, what benefit will the husband derive from the capital on which he had reckoned but his position?

In this state of things, a wife is a burden instead of a helpmate. How, in fact, is it to be expected that a girl brought up in silk and lace should make a good housekeeper, a frugal companion, a profitable partner? Her coquettish instincts—stupidly developed by her parents, who considered them a means of establishing her and relieving themselves—cause her to behold in marriage nothing more than an easy method of exchanging lace for feathers, and flowers for diamonds. Their education is so null, not to say worse, that wealthy women do not even suspect that marriage may convert them into mothers of families, and that serious duties are incumbent on them. They only see an opportunity of seizing the liberty after which they sigh, of satisfying their whims, in defiance of a master-slave, who is liberally paid if they vouchsafe him a smile, and overpaid if they allow him to share their extravagances. As matters go at present, portioned marriage is a luxury which none but opulent financiers dare indulge in. Many a little citizen's daughter, with a dowry of a hundred thousand francs, assumes, as a thing of course, the right of spending ten thousand francs a year.

One would say, to see the manner in which Paris girls are brought up now-o'-days, that they were all either millionnaires, or destined for the seraglio. "Housewife, or courtisane," said Proudhon, coarsely, "there is no possible medium." What are they taught in their boarding-schools? Unhappily, it is only a traditional pleasantry to suppose that they learn to make pickles and preserves. They are taught to bedizen themselves, to claw the piano in deplorable style, to sit a horse like a monkey on a camel's back. They cannot even embroider, like the ancient châtelaines, who, during the Crusades, made tapestry which is now the delight of modern antiquaries. For their mother's fête-day, they buy a ready-worked something, of which they fill in the ground. They murder one of Strauss's waltzes, if they can manage to read the notes; but they don't know the A B C of the inside of a house. Puppets of parade, they would exhaust the sands of Pactolus in ruinous fancies and futile caprices; and yet these damsels are astonished if the men are anxious about the amount of their dowry. M.

* See MODERN FRENCH MARRIAGES, page 42 of the present volume.

Thévenin declares that he had rather turn fakir, and pass his whole life in contemplation, than espouse one of these empty, stupid, proud, and pretentious women, who believe themselves musicians because they can get through a polka, distinguished because they are draped with a cashmere, and well-born because they don't know the price of butter!

Who would believe that, in this respect, the French ought to take example by the people reputed the most mercantile on the face of the earth? The English, those pitiless dealers in Bibles, cotton, and opium! The English, whom we (the French) justly regard so attached to material interests; these English strip off their usual character when the choice of a companion is in question. A clever writer (M. Perdonnet), while sketching George Stephenson's biography, observes: "Many people will consider that he fell in love in a perilous, uncalculating, very bold, and very rash way. In fact, he was smitten by two bright eyes which did not possess a single penny."

"This is a crime with us," is M. Thévenin's comment. "Love, in France, as Benjamin Constant has said, is no more than a juxtaposition; and one of the causes of England's superiority over France, is that, with our neighbours, marriage is considered as a happy and agreeable association destined to soften, by sharing them, the burdens of life. With us, on the contrary, it is a cash affair. Marriages of inclination are so superior to money matches, that it would be puerile to insist upon the point. Every man who has the sentiment of individuality, understands it thoroughly. A man and a woman united by love are millionaires without knowing it; they have the strength and the riches of the heart."

The Abbé Bautain has written, in his *Mariage du Jour*, "For a man of right feeling, it must always be a shame and a self-reproach to owe his elevation and his existence to having caught the affections of a wealthy girl." It is the dowry, therefore, which is the grand stumbling-stone of matrimony. Far from being the principal consideration, it should be held as an accessory, to be kept quite in the background; and to be obliged to insist on so evident a fact, is the severest criticism it is possible to inflict. If the heart is not the first and only thing to be consulted in matrimony, let us have the courage to say so, and to call by some name other than "marriage" commercial associations regulated by debit and credit. That a woman possesses a respectable cash-box, is no reason for turning one's back on her; but the cash-box should never be admitted as an argument in her favour; especially as "women with portions are mostly spendthrifts, while portionless women are given to saving."

Touching the matrimonial dispositions consequent on this state of things, and at present current in the capital of France, M. Edmond About humorously relates what a country friend, whom we will call M. Vignerion, saw and heard during a recent visit to the metropo-

lis. This friend is a plain and simple family man, who had lived in Paris during his youth, but who now goes to bed with the cocks and hens, is fully occupied from morning till night, and sleeps soundly from night till morning. He is a great admirer of the fair sex, and an in-door Don Quixote to redress their wrongs. He is indignant when he sees a good-hearted girl playing wallflower at a provincial ball, and is disgusted that old maids should have been left unmarried because they were not rich enough to buy husbands. Yet this philanthropist returned rejoicing in the wonderful news of the Bachelors' Strike. The Parisiens have resolved that, at no price whatever, will they contract matrimony with the Parisiennes!

The conspiracy assumed its now formidable proportions at the close of a ball given by his chum and college friend, Léon S. The evening, without exaggeration, had been delightful, for a ball at the close of the season. Vignerion counted more than forty really pretty women, married or single; and it is not very easy to distinguish them, for they all wear the same style of dress, and talk in the same way, as near as may be. You have nothing but the diamonds to go by. But many dames in good society leave their diamonds at home in the month of May. The young men were very brisk and active; they had not that fonder look which you remark in them at the finish of the carnival. Spring-time had freshened up their spirits, exactly as it was freshening the sap in the trees.

With one or two exceptions, all the guests remained till morning, and their appetite exceeded the stock of provisions laid in by the maître d'hôtel. The public had to be divided into three separate batches, while they sent out to wake up the nearest restaurant. Vignerion made one of the final series, together with his entertainer, Léon, and nine or ten intrepid dancers, who cut and came again with equal vigour. As for himself, his appetite is rustic, even when he happens to be in Paris; whether he sleep, or whether he wake, it goes to bed at eight o'clock, and all the cannon of the Invalides would not rouse it. He remained, nevertheless, at Léon's entreaties, being the only friend of his youth he now has left. He had seven or eight, equally intimate, when he (Léon) married in 1850. Madame sent them about their business, one after the other; this one because his cravat was badly tied, another because he was not sufficiently pious, a third because he had married a too unpretending wife, and a fourth because he did not like Gounod's music. A Parisien chooses his friends himself; but his wife revises the list, striking them out sometimes to the very last.

When the third series had sweetened their coffee and lighted their cigars, the conversation grew animated, as will happen after plenty of champagne. Vignerion, who had taken nothing but a cup of tea, contributed his share by some profound reflections on the secret harmonies which connect the institution of marriage with

the season of spring. An immense roar of laughter was his reward; he found that he had unconsciously strayed into a wasps'-nest of hardened and slightly-topsy bachelors. When a man tumbles into the water, his first movement is to seize a branch. Vigneron snatched at Léon, as one of his own sort, calling on him to testify to the truth.

Léon shook his head, and said, "My good old fellow, you have seen here to-night a tolerable number of pretty girls?"

"Enormous."

"Not so many as that. But there were seven or eight who may pass for handsome, belonging to honourable families, well educated in the best schools or convents, who are not deficient either in health, intellect, or grace, and yet who, in spite of those advantages, have been dragged through all the ball-rooms of Paris without finding a man to marry them!"

"What!" exclaimed Vigneron. "Has human avarice made such awful progress as that? Are we fallen so low that, for want of a little cash—"

"Stop! You are going to waste your breath on a fine bit of declamation. The vile metal, is it not? Simple-minded man of the fields! It is not the vile metal which is wanting. They are handsomely portioned, those turtle-doves! If they were not, things would work smoothly of themselves, and my observation would be common-place and pointless. But they *have* portions, in ready cash. The poorest of the seven has eighty thousand francs paid in at the notary's; the richest has four hundred thousand in "obligations" on the Railway du Nord; the five others may be represented by a sliding scale between those two figures. And yet no man—I mean none of the men whom they could accept—will have anything to do with them or their money. An obstinate refusal is offered to these tempting little personages, and to these dowries which would make provincial suitors open wide both their eyes and their mouth. What do you think of it?"

"I think that you are making game of me, and that your treatment is not what it should be towards a friend who ought to have been in bed six hours ago."

"Ask these gentlemen. They will all tell you, with a single voice, that mine is not the only house in which the same phenomenon is manifested. Everywhere it is the same story; make a tour through the salons of Paris, and you will see. You country-folk, when you see a girl with two hundred thousand francs wearing the crown of St. Catharine, become distrustful, suspect hidden faults, and say to yourselves that there is something underneath the surface. You inquire whether her parents have not figured at the assizes, whether the lady be not epileptic, or have been too familiar with one of her young cousins. In Paris, my lad, nobody is now surprised to meet with single women of five-and-twenty. It is well known that they and their dowry have run up to seed, because the men will have nothing to say to them."

"But why not?"

"Ask these gentlemen! You have before you a whole batch of bachelors. I am married. If I were to plead the cause of celibacy, I should appear to grumble at my lot, and to find fault with somebody, which is far from my intention and thought."

A baby of eighteen, who smoked a big cigar while he coaxed his hopes of a moustache, addressed the company, and coolly said, "Word of honour, my dear monsieur, your innocence surprises me. Daddy Thibautodé, the author of my being, left me a hundred thousand francs a year. A young man like me, settled on the pavé of Paris, cannot do with a centime less. I spend half of it on my stable; and yet I have only three race-horses, or, strictly speaking, two and a half. The rest allows me to be loved, at second hand, for my own sake, as amant de cœur, by the flower of the world of crinoline. Yesterday I was friends with Nana, whom I shall leave to-morrow for Tata, unless the azure breeze of fancy wafts me into Zaza's lap. I shall not ruin myself, never fear! I know my arithmetic, and that is all I ever learnt at school. I expect to go on quietly in that way, to the end of my life, after the example of several venerable gentlemen who now adorn the Boulevard. Confess that I should be the biggest of simpletons to share this modest income with an everyday prude and a heap of little Thibautodés, who would not afford me the slightest amusement."

Poor honest Vigneron was deeply disgusted with this precocious mannikin, rotten before he was ripe, and was setting to work to give him a lesson; but his speech was put down with so unanimous a groan, that eloquence to that effect was superfluous. When the row subsided, a handsome fellow of five-and-thirty took up the discourse, and said:

"Don't believe, monsieur, that stupid selfishness and a taste for easy pleasures are the sole reason which deter us from marrying. I am neither a selfish nor an idle man. I have worked for my own living all my life, and my only regret is that I cannot work for a family. But consider my position, and tell me what you would do in my place. I have raised myself, not without difficulty, to an appointment of twelve thousand francs a year. My income suffices to maintain me. If—"

"One moment," Vigneron interposed. "Marry a wife who will bring you as much. That is the way to make comfortable establishments."

"In the country, perhaps; in Paris, no. You are not aware, monsieur, what Paris has become within the last few years. A wife who brought me twelve thousand francs a year, would add more to my expenses than to my income. In the first place, she would expect to spend, herself, in dress, furniture, dinner-giving, show, the full interest of her capital. I should be well off if she abstained from trenching upon my own earnings. The position which I occupy opens to her the doors of a certain class of society; by what reason should I be able to persuade her not to enter it? She would

answer, without hesitation, 'I married you for that, monsieur, and for nothing else.' If I take her there, she will discover, as soon as she has crossed the threshold, that she is not so well dressed as Madame So-and-so. She will not perhaps insist on my giving her as many diamonds as she beholds sparkling on other ladies; but, by way of compensation, she will require to be got up by the most fashionable dressmaker going. Do you know the average cost of a ball to the husband of the most reasonable wife? Three hundred francs! Manage that with an income of two thousand francs per month. I say nothing about children; with only one son, we should be in poverty. And he, poor little wretch! What should we have to leave him, except our debts? In the country, respectable people almost always save; because, in the country, they live for themselves. In Paris, honest people almost all run into debt, because they are obliged to live for others. I am not talking of the single man, who has the right to be a philosopher; but the married man is the slave of a slave. He belongs to his wife, who belongs to vanity."

"Monsieur," said Vigneron, warmly protesting against so sweeping an accusation, "there are sensible women to be found even in Paris."

The gentleman smiled politely, and condescendingly replied, "Yes, monsieur; I am acquainted with more than one. I even believe that in general women are more reasonable than men. In the first place, they are more temperate, and abstain from the poisons which trouble the brain. You will find sensible women amongst the common people—innocent victims of the public-house; amongst the small shopkeepers, who lay aside sou by sou, to meet a bill or pay their rent. You will find them in a higher sphere amongst all women of a certain age, who have passed five-and-forty, and who own it. These latter have received a more solid education than the animated dolls manufactured now; they have had time for reading, and have acquired the habit of thinking. They dwell on a moral elevation, in which the riot of the Boulevards, the bottles broken at 'la Marche,' and the chansons of Mademoiselle Thérèse, awake no echo."

"Ah!" murmured Vigneron, with increasing interest.—"The folly which I blame only rages in a special medium, within a sort of ring fence, in which several thousand women of unequal rank, fortune, and beauty, are perpetually striving to eclipse each other. This medium, in which our lot unfortunately is cast, is what is called, par excellence, 'the world.' The girls who danced here to-night are girls of the world; and marry on the sole condition of becoming women of the world. Now the obligation to find lodgings, carriages, dress, and ornaments for a woman of the world, hot in the pursuit of worldly steeple-chases, entails at present such an amount of outlay that an intelligent bachelor will look twice before he incurs it."

"But, monsieur," pleaded Vigneron, "there is no pleasure without pain. Happiness costs a

little dearer in Paris than it does in the provinces; but it is consequently all the more highly relished."

At this, another speaker, a man of forty, went off like a rocket. "Happiness!" he shouted. "Of what sort of happiness are you speaking, if you please? I am a widower, and I give you my solemn promise that you won't catch me at that phase of happiness again. I did not regard money in the least. My fortune is only too considerable, for all the good I ever got out of it. From all quarters I had offers of marriage portions. I said, No. Since I have the means of marrying the woman who pleases me, I will take a poor one, and she will thank me for it. I therefore married a parvenu. I raised to my own position one of those poor desolate creatures who hawk about a forced smile, a melancholy bait at which nobody bites. I did bite. There was a family. I provided for the family."

"Doubtless you had your reward."

"They proved to me, figures in hand, that to produce mademoiselle and bring her forth into the light of day, they had got into debt a hundred thousand francs. I paid it. I had then only to pocket my happiness, and walk away with it. A pretty joke! My wife, so long as she was not my wife, agreed with me on every point. The day after the wedding, she drew up her head as stiff as a rattlesnake. She unmasked a whole battery of stupidities, old and new, ready to fire at my poor common sense. She had a creed of her own, principles of her own, a confessor of her own, a literature and a pharmacopeia of her own, with a whole battalion of female friends of her own, which never, thank Heaven, have been mine. My tastes are simple; hers were quite the contrary. My father left me a name of which I am proud, and a title for which I do not care a straw. One belongs to one's epoch; my wife belonged to hers. The right to call herself 'marquise' was too much for her poor weak head. She dragged my coat of arms out of its retreat, to stick it on the panels of my carriage, on my plate, linen, carpets, furniture. I only wonder she did not clap it on my back. She was born Dupont in the male line, and Mathieu in the female. Take care, therefore, how you marry a 'bourgeoise' out of love for simplicity! After two years of the most disunited union that ever fettered a well-meaning man, I was neither master nor servant in my own house. My wife, backed by half a dozen dear friends, had usurped everything. They gave slander-parties at my expense, at home and abroad. Every Saturday, seven Christian mouths confessed my iniquities to a worthy Jesuit. Thoroughly worn out, I escaped by the door; and I ask you, Monsieur the Moralist, what you would have done in my place? My wife was not a woman, but something hollow, endowed with locomotion, warm, restless, and overstocked with nerves; a fountain of tears, an orchestra of cries, a catapult of convulsions, a galvanic pile. And all her friends (I have only reckoned six, but they might be a

dozen) were as like her as one drop of acid is like another. My wife is dead—Heaven be praised!—but the others survive, and they have their imitators. The world of Paris lies before them; may my guardian angel keep me out of their way!"

Every guest applauded this tirade; whence Vigneron concluded that they all agreed with the orator. And though he had hitherto preached the holy cause of matrimony, he could not help admitting that the Parisian bachelors had some little reason for their strike. M. About, however, says: "Suitors of Paris, strike if you please; but don't try to draw us into the movement! We are country people, and contrive to find the wives we require, because we take the trouble to fashion them ourselves. I wish you may hit upon the same happy method."

But, whether as a joke or a real fact, the *Publicité* newspaper of Marseilles reports that the matrimonial strike is gaining ground in France. "Six thousand single men, from twenty to forty years of age, met on the common of Belle-de-Mai, and there, hand in hand, swore not to think of marrying until fresh orders; that is, until a radical change has taken place in our young ladies' ways and doings. No more ruinous dress; no more coquetry; no more expensive idleness; but a return to economical and homely life, to conduct becoming mothers of families and the habits of modest wives. Such are the terms laid down. Therefore, let the fair sex in France take warning; the matter is more serious than they fancy."

Still, a few advertisements, quite recently inserted, prove that the universal nation has not taken vows of celibacy. Samples are given, with true initials and address, to enable our readers to judge and act for themselves, entirely on their own responsibility.

Marriage.—A Monsieur desires to unite himself to a young lady with either small or considerable fortune. Write, Post Restante, Paris. V. A. S.

Notice to Families.—A young foreigner, a very suitable match, and in the receipt of an income of fifteen thousand francs, desires to marry a young lady from seventeen to twenty years of age, pretty, well educated, and belonging to an honourable family. Write and send portrait to M. Léon Rehana, Poste Restante, Paris.

Three hundred single women or widows to marry, in every position of fortune.—M. Bourillon, secret intermediary of families, 24, Rue de Rivoli, receives visits every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, from two till five.

A Mr. of fifty-two years, income eight thousand francs, desires to marry suitably. X. Jan., Poste Restante, Paris.

A Monsieur of forty years, income ten thousand francs, would unite himself to a single lady or widow of from twenty-five to thirty-five years, possessing from fifty to one hundred thousand francs dowry. M. M., post paid, Poste Restante, Paris.

Serious Marriage.—A public functionary, of

irreproachable conduct, single, thirty-one years of age, appointments two thousand four hundred francs, very agreeable employment, taking little time, and allowing him to engage in other occupations, possessed of six thousand francs savings, desires to espouse a young lady of respectable family, with a portion, or an eligible little establishment in Paris. Honourability is the first requisite. Write, pre paid, Poste Restante, to the initials K. R. S.

AMATEUR FINANCE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

"Is it possible to live upon a hundred and fifty pounds a year?"

This was the question I put to myself one morning while occupied with my after-breakfast pipe. I had just sold out of the army, and my commission had been disposed of for the regulation price of eighteen hundred pounds (for I was captain in an infantry regiment), plus eight hundred pounds "above regulation," which my successor, being a wealthy man and very ambitious of promotion, had given me, as an inducement to leave the service. This was the sum total of my worldly riches—two thousand six hundred pounds; but *per contra*, as the ledgers say, I owed some little money: the after-crop of a not very large quantity of debt seed, which I had sown with pretty steady perseverance, during my ten years of military life. To make a long story short, when I had settled with every one, had squared matters with all my creditors, and had invested my balance both securely and at a very favourable rate of interest, my annual income, I found, would come within a few shillings of one hundred and fifty pounds.

Now, there are very different ways of interpreting the meaning of the verb, to live. With some people it means the wherewith to keep a house over your head, feed and clothe yourself and family, and pay your way as you go along. To others, a town mansion, a country house, a carriage, horses, grooms, footmen, and women servants, are included in the actual necessities of life: to say nothing of an autumnal trip to the Continent, fox-hunting in the winter, and parties every night, during the London season. I have known a country clergyman live respectably, bring up a large family of children, pay his way honestly, and put by something for a rainy day, on five hundred pounds a year. I have also known bachelors with five thousand per annum, who were always in pecuniary difficulties. With me, "to live," meant to have comfortable lodgings in London; to be able to dine well at "The Rag," whenever I was not invited out; to have the wherewith to go to this or that friend's shooting-box in the autumn; to run over for two or three weeks to Paris, in the spring, and to Homburg, when so inclined; to have money in moderation in my pocket whenever I wanted it; in short, not to deny myself anything in reason, for want of funds. Could this be done for a hundred and fifty pounds a

year? Certainly not. My tailor's bill alone would absorb more than a third of that sum, and for "sundries," pocket money, and dinner, I required, without any undue extravagance, at least a pound a day. It was very clear, therefore, that, after the fashion which men of the world call life, my existence would be nought but utter misery unless I could spend at least five hundred a year. The problem to solve, therefore, was, how could my income be increased from one hundred and fifty to five hundred per annum?

I belong to that numerous class of English gentlemen, who, not being brought up to any particular calling or profession, can do little or nothing towards earning even dry bread, far less bread and cheese. It is true, I had been for some ten years in the army; but soldiering cannot be called a trade, or, if it be one, I certainly had not so learned the trade as to make it of any use to me in after life. To me—as to hundreds of young men—the service had been but a gentlemanly way of passing my time. The rudiments of drill I knew as well as most men; I could command my company on parade without making mistakes, even when the said company was acting as skirmishers at an Aldershot review, under the eyes of old Pennefather. The details about paying, clothing, feeding, and lodging the men, I left to my colour sergeant; still, I was sufficiently acquainted with the rules and regulations of the army, to be able to check him when anything went wrong. In short, I was a fair average regimental officer of the post-Crimean school.

It might have been possible for me to get a county police appointment, but it would have greatly interfered with my schemes of future enjoyment.

"Why not turn speculator?" said my friend Vernon of the Guards, one night in the smoking-room of his club, after I had been his guest at dinner in that comfortable establishment, and had propounded my difficulties to him: "Why not become one of your regular City fellows, and turn speculator? They have always lots of money, and don't seem to work very hard for it. Their chief business—I know two or three of them—seems to be to go into the city every day at about eleven o'clock with an umbrella, and walk back at about four. It is not very hard work, and I am sure you would make money, as well as have plenty of time to enjoy yourself when you get back to the West-end."

"Why not turn speculator?" He might as well have asked me why not turn cardinal, or Baptist preacher, or surgical lecturer. To have plenty of money I was by no means loth to walk in the City every day with an umbrella, and remain there from eleven to four. But what to do when I got there—how or where to find the money, or in what way was I to make it? It was not possible—so I reasoned with myself—that there could be, somewhere east of Temple-bar, a society or an individual that paid gentlemanly-looking men a certain large weekly salary for walking into the City every day with umbrellas under their arms. Still, in some re-

spects, now that I thought of it, Vernon was right. I myself knew several individuals who had not been brought up to business, but who had now turned "speculators," or "City fellows;" who had no offices of their own; who walked every day to the east with umbrellas under their arms; and who seemed to make a handsome living, or at least enough to keep themselves handsomely. The difficulty with me was, where to begin to learn, or how to find out, the real nature of the business or work performed by a "City fellow."

Belonging to our club—the Army and Navy, otherwise the "Rag" before mentioned—there was a gentleman who, although he was always called "Captain" by the waiters, had certainly no claim to that title, seeing that he had been only twelve months in the army, and that it was more than twenty years since he had sold out as a cornet. Smithson—that was his name—had, when a boy at school, conceived the idea that he would like to be a soldier, and had tormented every one belonging to, or connected with, his family, until he got his name put down for a commission. In those days candidates for the army had no examination to pass before entering the service, or I fear Smithson would have had a poor chance of ever wearing a red coat. As it was, he obtained what he wanted, but not until he was upwards of twenty years old, at which age he was gazetted to a heavy dragoon regiment. Coming up to London with his father, getting himself measured for scarlet coats—the heavies of those anti-tunic days wore tail-coats—fitted with helmet, "let in" with chargers, buckled with sword, put into overalls; hampered with regulation spurs, and made the general victim of outfitters, tailors, military accoutrement-makers, and horse-dealers, was pretty good fun, and Smithson liked it well enough. Even when he went down to join his corps at Birmingham, and found himself master of a barrack-room neatly furnished by his outfitter, with a tall heavy dragoon servant, who called him "sir" every moment, wore his shirts, drank his private store of brandy, and smoked his cigars, Smithson was far from being unhappy. To dine at mess, and be able to call for wine, luncheon, or anything else he wanted (or thought he wanted), was an immense pleasure to this young "plunger;" likewise to put on his undress uniform, and ride or walk through the streets, "showing off." But soon there came a change. The rules and regulations of the service required that Smithson should go through the ordinary course of riding-school drill, and he was ordered to put himself under the directions of the riding-master: a grabbed old officer, who had risen from the ranks, who never dined at mess, who had nine children, small pay, and a wife who was the dread of the regimental sergeant-major himself.

To riding-school, then, Smithson had to go, and to commence his torments was ordered to mount, walk, and trot his horse with "stirrups up"—that is, to bump round the school without stirrups. A day of this exercise—an hour

in the morning, and one in the afternoon—was bad enough; but when it came to day after day, week after week, and month after month of it, no man—at least no Smithson—could stand it. He first complained to his colonel that he could not get through the school. The colonel asked the riding-master, who declared that Smithson could not ride, and therefore ought still to be kept bumping round without stirrups; Smithson himself got disgusted, and after a time sold out. There was nothing against him, except, either he could not ride, or that the crabbed riding-master did not like to lose a victim. Smithson retired from the service under the shade of his club, and from that day to this has been “Captain Smithson.”

To Smithson I went, to ask how men made money by going into the City every day with umbrellas under their arms for a few hours? Though Smithson had not taken honours as a dragoon, he was far from being a fool. Twenty years of London life had taught him a few things worth knowing, and therefore I thought that I could not do better than apply to Smithson.

His reply showed that my confidence was not misplaced. “You want to make money?” he said; “then be a director. I’ll find you a company in which you can obtain a seat at the board, and you will then merely have to go into the City every day for a few hours (with an umbrella), in order to become a wealthy man.”

“But,” I objected, “I never was educated to business; I know nothing about it; I should most likely make a mess of the very first thing I put my hand to.”

“Don’t be an ass,” was Smithson’s reply. “Do you imagine that half the men whose names you see figuring in the lists of directors know anything about business? Look at Sims—you remember Sims, who was in the 110th? Where did Sims learn anything about business, or business matters? And yet he is director on the boards of seven companies, each of which give him three guineas a week—three times seven’s twenty-one, and fifty-two times twenty-one make a thousand and ninety-two guineas—not pounds—a year. I don’t say that you can do as well as Sims at first; of course you can’t. But you will do quite as well a year or two hence; perhaps better. Sims is a fool; you are not. Sims has no money; you have some—though not much. Be guided by me, and you will thank me for having put you at your ease, as the French say, before six months are over.”

Acting upon Smithson’s advice, I at once borrowed, on the security of the mortgage in which what little money I had was invested, the sum of five hundred pounds. This amount I deposited as a drawing or current account in a highly respectable bank, to which I had obtained an introduction. Having this reference behind me, I was, through Smithson’s means, introduced to a gentleman who was trying to get up a direction for the “RIO GRANDE TALHOOK SILVER AND UNITED LEAD MINING COMPANY (LIMITED).” This gentleman was by profession a

solicitor without practice; by occupation what is called “a promoter.” He was none of your flash, well-to-do, Greenwich-dining, Cremorne-frequenting, establishment-in-St.-John’s-Wood-keeping, promoters; but a poor, inoffensive, seedy creature, very civil, very much out at elbows, and apparently thankful for the smallest favours. When I was first introduced to him, he made a feeble attempt to persuade me, that in order to become a director of the “RIO GRANDE TALHOOK SILVER AND UNITED LEAD MINING COMPANY (LIMITED),” I would be obliged to pay money down, before I could be qualified. Seeing, I presume, that such an idea was preposterous, or at least that I could not entertain it for a moment, he soon came round, and, after offering to qualify me for nothing, ended by acknowledging that if I wanted to be a director of the company, I could be paid for accepting a seat at the board. This I agreed to, and forthwith received an undertaking by which it was stipulated that in the event of my becoming a director, and provided that the company proceeded to an allotment, I was to be given one hundred shares, on each of which five pounds had been paid: thus receiving a bonus of five hundred pounds for joining a direction which was to give me three guineas a week for sitting at the board.

In due time, the Rio Grande Company was floated, and, considering it was a mining concern, it took very well indeed with the public. The directors were few in number, but they were fairly respectable, and among them I thought that my own name, “CAPTAIN RICKLEY, ARMY AND NAVY CLUB,” read very well indeed.

As Smithson said, my name being on one direction was the first step that was wanting in order to make me a regular City man and man of business. A week after my name was published as a director of the Rio Grande, I had a couple of dozen applications to allow myself to be put on the board of other companies. Some of these were pretty respectable in their character, others the merest swindles, but one and all appeared most anxious to get directors. From those which appeared to be the best I selected three, and, receiving from each of these some five hundred pounds in paid-up shares, as well as three guineas a week for sitting at the board once every seven days, I soon began to find that my income had materially increased, and that I had done wisely in taking Smithson’s advice. I now took up my umbrella every morning and walked to the City, coming back in about four hours with the pleasing knowledge that I was earning, in director’s fees alone—to say nothing of the shares which had been given me—at least ten or twelve guineas a week, and that my income was likely to increase. It is true that the companies which I had joined were by no means first-rate concerns, but much the contrary. Besides the “RIO GRANDE MINING,” I was on the direction of the “INDIA-RUBBER SHOEING AND CARRIAGE-WHEEL COVERING COMPANY (LIMITED),” “THE NORTH-EAST OF AMERICA OVERLAND TRAFFIC, PASSENGER,

AND TRADING COMPANY (LIMITED); and "THE DIRECT TELEGRAPH TO BARBADOES COMPANY (LIMITED)."

All these served to give me a name in the City with a certain class, and before I had been twelve months at the work, my business as a director had increased so much that I was obliged to take an office and hire a clerk. Still—although taken collectively the number of boards at which I had a seat gave me a certain amount of respectability with the director-seeking, joint-stock-company-getting-up, share-allotting, world—not one of the concerns with which I was mixed up could be called even a second-class affair. As I got richer I became more and more ambitious of having my name connected with something that would give me a better commercial standing as well as more material wealth. I no longer asked myself whether I could possibly live upon a hundred and fifty pounds a year, for I knew I could spend five times that amount, and still put something by. My respectability as to money was undoubtedly. I left off frequenting the Rag, as being too "young" a club for a man in my position. I set up a brougham, kept my private account at Drummond's, had serious thoughts of taking a wife, and got myself elected a member of the Conservative Club.

My friendship for Smithson had not decreased, although I had distanced him in the race. Smithson was a director of one or two of my companies, but he did not push his luck with sufficient energy. If he had gone to bed early the night before (an event which very rarely happened), and could manage to get over his breakfast and cigar by ten o'clock next morning, he generally found his way on a board-day to the office. But for one board meeting that he was present at, he missed two.

About this time, credit and finance companies began to attract notice in London. One or two of these concerns had been started, and others were about to come out. Talking over the probable gains of such undertakings, in the board-room of the Rio Grande Company, three or four of the directors agreed to start a finance company for themselves, and invited Smithson and myself to come on the direction. We both consented, and in very few days we published to the world a scheme by which people had only to take shares in this concern, in order to become wealthy beyond the hopes of ordinary mortals. The name of our company was, the "GENERAL HOUSE AND LAND FINANCE AND CREDIT COMPANY (LIMITED); " the managing director was to be myself, the secretary was to be Smithson, my salary was to be two thousand a year, Smithson's was to be eight hundred, and every director was to have a five-pound note each time he attended a board meeting.

The business which the "GENERAL HOUSE AND LAND FINANCE" proposed to do, was as follows: Our nominal capital was to be a million, but of this only two hundred and fifty thousand pounds were to be called up for the present. We intended to invite depositors to place their money with us, and, to induce them to do so,

we offered them a much higher rate of interest than was current with the joint-stock banks. The money thus lent us—say at five per cent—we lent out again at ten, twelve, and even a higher per-centa ge, taking the security of houses, lands, or any other immovable property, for our repayment. This alone would have left us a wide margin for profit, notwithstanding the great office expenses we had to pay. But we intended to do better than that. We meant not only to lend and charge a high rate of interest for the money of our depositors, but to lend, and charge for, our acceptances, which was—in England at least—a scheme entirely new, and which could hardly fail to be profitable. Thus, suppose an individual who owned houses and land to the amount of say ten thousand pounds, wanted to borrow money upon them. To raise a mortgage in the ordinary way, was a matter of time, expense, and greater or less publicity. He could not take the property in his pocket to the bank, and ask them to discount it as he would a bill; and to deposit title-deeds with a banker—when he will take them—as security for loans, injures a man's credit very much. The intending borrower—who seldom wants the accommodation for any length of time, but always wishes the affair to be kept secret—would therefore come to us, and upon the security of his ten thousand pounds' worth of property, would ask for an advance of six thousand pounds for a year. We should reply that we could not give him the cash, but if he liked to draw upon us, we would accept bills for that amount, and not charge him more than ten per cent for doing so.

Knowing that the kites flown by a finance company of good credit could be discounted at any bank at the current rates of the day, the borrower invariably accepted our offer. We were made quite safe, by the title-deeds which were left with us; and he was content with getting his money, although he had to pay a somewhat higher rate of interest for the use of it. On the other hand, the finance company got a good rate of interest for merely putting its name to bills, which were quite secure from having the title-deeds of property, with a very large margin, in hand. When transactions of this kind came to be multiplied, no wonder that we hoped to declare a dividend of at least twenty-five per cent upon our paid-up capital.

But there was another means of making money which we profited very largely by. At the period I write of—as is still the case—joint-stock companies of various sorts were "floated," with greater or less success, every day of the week. After a time it became impossible for any of these schemes to take with the public, unless the concern were palpably "a good thing," or unless some finance company stood godfather for it before the share-taking world. Thus, to us there would perhaps come a gentleman who had a patent by which writing-paper could be made out of old ink, or plate glass fabricated from turnip-tops. The patent might be good—

excellent—in its way, but the unfortunate patentee never had money with which to bring it to the notice of the public. He might be able to bring in three or four good men as directors, but that was all. Where could he get the four or five hundred pounds that were necessary to advertise, hire offices, print several thousand copies of a prospectus, and do all the hundred needful things that must be done before a joint-stock affair can be floated? In his dilemma he would come to us. We agreed to provide everything—for a consideration, of course. We took upon ourselves all the expenses of advertising; we got the prospectus published, and lent the prestige of our name; we puffed, wrote up, and praised the scheme through our several agents. If the project died before the shares were allotted, we got nothing—there was nothing to get—for our trouble. If it "floated," we received a premium of from five to twenty thousand pounds out of the first deposits paid. We were in most cases winners. For our immense fee, we had not pledged ourselves to anything. If any company we "brought out" had come to grief, we should not have lost sixpence by it. On the contrary, there was more than one concern which had been launched into the world under the shadow of our wing, and which died a natural death. But what cared we? Our fee had been paid—it was always the very first charge which had to be paid—and it was of no consequence to us whether or not the young company lived or died.

After the first six months we declared a dividend upon our paid-up capital, at the rate of thirty per cent per annum; besides putting aside some twenty thousand pounds as the commencement of a reserve fund.

What surprised me, was the ease with which I got over my duties as managing director of the "GENERAL HOUSE AND LAND FINANCE AND CREDIT COMPANY." Before becoming a director in this undertaking, I had had no financial experience whatever. However, I managed to do pretty good yeoman's work. As time went on, I got accustomed to the business, and not ill versed in the various ways of making money for the concern. Smithson, our secretary, also got through his duties well, and any one not knowing our antecedents, would have hardly believed that we were both mere ex-soldiers, who hardly knew on which side of the ledger to write the debit and on which the credit of an account.

But fortune favoured us. Shortly after our company commenced business, a new species of joint-stock fever broke out suddenly. Every firm in which the partners were getting old, or of which the affairs were at the foundation a little shaky, seemed determined to make the concern a joint-stock company. Hitherto such undertakings had been got up by individual promoters, and had assumed a name which indicated what business they intended doing. But now we had "SMITH AND CO. (LIMITED)," "JONES, WILSON, AND

CO. (LIMITED);" "MASON, WATSON, AND CO. (LIMITED);" and a hundred other companies of the sort cropping up in every day's Times. As our credit stood good, and as we had the good sense to ask fees for launching new concerns which were lower than those of other similar companies, we obtained a good deal of work. It is true that we had sometimes to put a bold face upon introducing to the public something that would not bear a very close investigation. And one case of this sort I will relate in another chapter.

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS.

WHEN I was younger than I am now, was particular about my waistcoats, and carried a sense of my whiskers about with me like a solemn responsibility, I was accustomed, when called upon at evening parties and other high festivals, to sing, in a sentimental and foolish tenor, a song called "The Maids of Merry England, How beautiful are they!" I remember I used to sing both at the beginning of the verse and at the end of the verse; and I sung it with becoming gravity, as if it had been a patriotic toast or a sentiment about the wing of friendship. I have now in my mind's eye a vision of myself singing that song; and the vision is suggestive of something, on the whole, idiotic. Every hair of my head is in its proper place, glistening with macassar; my whiskers are carefully brushed out to make the most of them; my waistcoat is spotless; my white handkerchief is redolent of the latest perfume; and there I stand at the piano with a chest like a pouter pigeon, my head in the air, and my eyes on the ceiling, singing—The Maids of Merry England, How beautiful are they, with all the gravity proper to the execution of a sacred song from an oratorio. I remember that the maids of merry England who were privileged to listen to me sat around with their hands folded, and looked grave and solemn, as if it had been a sad truth that I was reminding them of. I don't think that there was any moral to the effect that beauty was only skin deep, and was doomed to fade, and that flesh, though fair, was only grass; but it was in that admittitory sense we took the sentiment, and it checked our levity, and made us all very seriously and solemnly happy. Ah me! those days of sentimental and flowered waistcoats are gone—gone, I fear, never to return. I now sing what are called comic songs, at evening parties, and instead of being sentimental about the unadorned beauty of the maids of merry England, am lyrically facetious about their crinolines and their back hair.

This is a pity; for in these days the maids of merry England have made themselves so very attractive, that it would be easy to be both sentimental and poetical about them. The sentiment, when I used to sing that song, was a mere formula. It was like singing about hearts of oak, Britannia, the ocean, and all that sort

of thing. It was not very new, it was not very true, and nobody cared particularly about the sentiment except as an excuse for singing a song. If it had been the hills or the vales or the back-gardens of merry England, we should have equally taken it for granted that they were beautiful.

At the time of which I speak, not quite twenty years ago, the maids of merry England were not so beautiful as they are at the present time; at least, they were not so attractive. It was the time which immediately preceded the introduction of crinoline; shoes and sandals were in vogue, leg-of-mutton sleeves and high waists had gone out, but bonnets were still pokey, and the female figure was made up after the clock-case model, which we are led to believe ruled the fashions in Noah's ark. There was little shape or make about the maid of merry England at that period. It was impossible to see her profile without a background of bonnet. All the wealth of beauty that lay as yet undiscovered in her hair, was plastered down over her temples in formal sheets of polished veneer, or tied up in a wisp and hid in a box behind. The only variety was a bunch of prim corkscrew curls which hung on either side of her face like ornaments for your fire-stoves. I almost fancy there was an idea that in order to look modest, and maidenly, and feminine, it was necessary to put the natural beauties of the face and figure a little in the shade.

Comparatively, the maids of merry England were beautiful, but they seemed to be afraid of being superlatively so. The manners of the maids at that time partook of the sober and rigid character of their costume. They were apt to sit with their hands folded, to deny themselves viands and drink in support of the genteel fiction that appetite was not maidenly, to refrain from speaking save when spoken to, and to have doubts about the propriety of dancing. It was a complaint of the time that the young ladies laced too tightly. That was true in a double sense: their moral natures were as tightly laced as their bodices. It was at about this time that the American ladies put the legs of their pianos into trousers.

The great transformation scene took place shortly after the International Exhibition of 1851. Harlequin Progress batted (technical term for using his wand), and the old woman in the cloak was suddenly transformed into a fairy princess. The clock-case, and the pokey bonnet, and the flat shoes, disappeared through the trap, and there was the princess in her expansive gauze skirt and natty boots, crowned with a cockle-shell. Before, she had hobbled like an old crone; now, she is on one toe pirouetting like a Peri! I am not going to enlarge, like a fashion book, on the graces of crinoline. It is not always graceful, and it is sometimes a nuisance—for it is proverbial that you can have too much even of a good thing—but I believe it is a fact that the adoption of this article of female attire was the foundation

of all the elegancies of dress that have since been built upon it. It did away with the rigid straight line, and introduced a graceful curve, and from that moment it became necessary that all things should be in an artistic concatenation accordingly. The bell-shaped dress obviated any necessity for tight lacing, by rendering the natural form of the body harmonious and compatible with the whole design. Under this new impetus, elegance and comfort went hand in hand. High-heeled boots harmonised with the embroidered petticoat (which was now an article of ornament as well as use), and high-heeled boots showed off a handsome foot, and at the same time kept the handsome foot out of the wet. Then followed the picturesque burnous, and the elegant lace shawl, both so superior in every way to the old three-cornered Paisley, or Indian, blanket, and the dowdy silk mantle that looked as if it were made out of veneer.

The bonnet was a very stubborn thing to deal with. The original model—which our women folks were too conservative to depart from altogether—was radically wrong. It was never adapted to any head whatever, and the fashion of twisting the hair into a knot behind rendered any attempt to reduce its proportions only an aggravation of the discomfort it caused. The front of the coal-scuttle admitted of various more or less graceful modifications; but the back remained an inexorable box, until some one hit upon the happy idea of cutting the back of the box out, and letting the great wealth of beauty that lies in the hair, flow out in natural luxuriance to delight the eyes of men. It was only the other day that women discovered the great treasure of beauty which lay in their hair. Formerly, the primary object of their dressing seemed to be to tie it up and plaster it down and put it out of sight. I suppose this prejudice—for it can be nothing else—came to us from the Puritans. What a long time we have been in outgrowing the austere fashions of those gloomy people!

Mr. Ruskin, who is allowed to be a judge of such matters, says that the present style of female dress is the most graceful and artistic ever worn. I quite agree with him, and I think it has had almost a magical effect in bringing out and setting off the beauty of the maids of merry England. There are no plain girls now-a-days. Positive ugliness is altogether banished from the land. All the girls are pretty. Walking in the streets, or driving in the Park, or sitting in a box at the Opera, one is kept in a state of continual admiration by the numbers of pretty girls that meet the eye on every hand. All this female beauty has of course existed at any time; but I venture to think that it is only lately that it has been shown off to the fullest advantage. In these days of economies and art training we know how to make the most and the best of things. Mark what a mine of beauty has been discovered in red hair. How many years is it, since red hair was contemptuously denominated “carrots”? To be caroty

was to be a fright, and an allusion to a *carroty* girl, in a song or play, was sure to raise a laugh of derision. But now, carrots are the fashion, the rage. The girl with the ruddy locks, instead of plastering her hair down, to look like polished slabs of Peterhead granite, combs it out and lets the sun into it, and straightway it is a fleece of gold. Golden locks—that is to say, the ridiculed “carrots” of another period—are now the admiration of all the men, and the envy of all the women. It is no secret, I believe, that many women are in the habit of bleaching their dark hair in order to impart to it a tinge of the fashionable and admired red. I am informed, too—and I can add my personal testimony to the fact—that red-haired girls who have been on the shelf until they are no longer young, are now going off in the matrimonial market like wildfire.

The great discovery that women have made, however, is not that auburn hair—as they love to call it—is particularly pretty; but that any coloured hair is pretty when naturally and artistically displayed. In fact, they have discovered that their hair is their chief beauty. I hold, that no woman can be ugly, or even plain, if she have a profusion of hair. The eye is nearly always a beautiful thing in woman. The mouth may be large and ungraceful, the nose may turn up, the cheeks may be too thin or too plump, but the eye, in its normal and natural state, is rarely without beauty, either of form or expression. Good eyes and a wealth of hair will cover a multitude of deficiencies in other respects. Our maiden aunts have found this out, and these elderly ladies are now as smart and almost as juvenile as our sweethearts. In fact, when Miss Tabitha and Miss Edith are out walking together, it is hard to say, until you come to close quarters, which is the old girl and which is the young one.

The moral influence of dress is well known to every one who has been exhilarated by clean linen, or depressed by an ill-fitting coat. I believe that we take a great deal of our moral tone from the cut of our clothes. A good condition of the clothes we wear, is necessary to sustain our self-satisfaction and complacency, but cut and fashion give elegance and ease. If you are sensible of being a *guy*, your comportment will be weak and ineffective. You cannot strut like a peacock when you know that your feathers are those of a turkey. You must have a sense of being up to the mark, before you can practise an elegant walk, or adopt an imposing swagger. When our dress was ungraceful and uncomfortable, we ourselves were ungraceful and uncomfortable also. The recent fashions have worked a wonderful change in this respect. The maids of merry England are much more lively than they used to be. They are more sprightly, they have more to say for themselves, and their manners, which formerly were cold and stiff and artificial, have now become easy and natural.

Viewing such a wealth of female beauty, and seeing on every hand so many charming faces

and graceful figures, I am sometimes disposed to look at our girls as the Scottish maiden looked at love—in the abstract. As an elderly fellow, and in the abstract, I am apt to think that our girls are too pretty to be married. When some great hulking fellow, with an elaborate shirt-front—which is generally his principal feature—comes into our society, and leads off (to St. George’s, Hanover-square) one of those pretty girls, who sing to me and prattle to me, and are the delight of my eyes with their sprightly and engaging ways, I feel a very strong inclination to kick him. I regard him as a bloated monopolist, a Vandal, a Goth, an iconoclast. I have written up, “Do not touch the statues,” and he *has* touched the statues; I have warned him not to pluck my flowers, and he has plucked them from under my very nose. This is very aggravating to an elderly fellow like myself—fellows who are either confirmed bachelors or very much married, and who consequently are privileged to regard love “in the abstract.” Which, by the way, is a very pleasant and innocent way of looking at it.

I will say this, however, that St. George’s, Hanover-square, has not now that blighting influence upon my flowers that it used to have in the old days. In those old days, when my pretty girls got married, they thought it a privilege and an obligation of their new state to disregard the elegancies of dress. They very soon got dowdy, and began to wear caps; and the consequence was, that the hulking fellow with the elaborate shirt-front very soon began to be indifferent. But, now-a-days, when the cap period approaches, the matron renews her youth with some clever little trick of hairdressing, which makes her look almost as young as her daughters. The world is all the brighter and pleasanter for these elegant and sprightly habits of our women folks. I only hope that, while they have learned to wear becoming clothes, and to dress their hair, they are not neglecting the art of making a flaky crust.

CUTTING OUT CATTLE.

THERE is great bustle and excitement at the cattle station this afternoon, for we begin to muster fat cattle and “strangers” to-morrow, and the stockmen from all the neighbouring stations have come to assist, and take away their stray stock.

We mean to start in the cool of the evening, ride over the plains about twenty miles, and camp out, so as to begin our work at daylight in the morning. All hands, blacks and whites, are very busy, catching horses down at the yard, saddling, rolling up blankets, and preparing for a day or two “out back on the plains.” Maneroo Jim is catching a buck-jumping colt from among the crowd of kicking and screaming horses assembled in the yard; an operation not to be accomplished without a good deal of swearing, and flourishing of long sticks. At

last the colt is drafted out of the crowd, and "bailed up" in a corner of the high rail fences which constitute the horse-yard; a saddle is as firmly secured on his back as girths, surcingle, and crupper can do it; and he is led out into the paddock. Jim is a tall lathy Sydney native, with long hair, and a brown face: a great swell in his way, with his white shirt, his white sailor-cut moleskin trousers, his little cabbage-tree hat and long black ribbons. The colt is a strong chestnut, five years old; he was roped, handled, and backed, two months ago; has been turned out since, and is fat and jolly. As he stands, with his back up, his tail tucked in, and showing the white of his wicked eyes, he looks vicious; what Jim calls "a regular nut, and no flies." Jim's mate catches hold of the colt's ear, and hangs on to it, while Jim gets well into his big colonial saddle and short stirrups.

"Let us go!" says Jim, and, with his back arched, his head and tail tucked in between his legs, and his feet together, the buck-jumper executes a rapid series of springs into the air, each accompanied with a jerk from his powerful loins. "Stick to him, Jim!" shout the delighted lookers-on, as the colt goes bucking round in a circle, screaming savagely at every bound. Jim does stick to him, throwing himself right back in the saddle at every plunge, and laying into his mount vigorously with a green hide-cutting whip.

Peace being established between these two, consequent on the colt's exhaustion, we all take a good drink of water, light our pipes, and start, a party of fifteen or sixteen, two or three "swells," seven or eight stockmen, and some black boys. Most of us have spare horses leading alongside of us; each has his blanket, quart pot, and a bit of bread and beef, packed on his back. Our party jogs quietly along, out through the low polygonum scrub which skirts the river, on to the great grey plain stretching like a sea before us, past the quiet milking cattle, that stray about the home station, past distant lines of cows and bullocks marching solemnly along converging tracks to their accustomed watering-place, past mobs of wilder cattle, that run together as we approach, stare awhile at us, then start, galloping for some place of rendezvous or "camp." Jim's colt wants a canter, so he is started off to "round them up." He gallops round them once or twice, and stops them on a little sand-hill.

An hour more, and, ahead of us, a couple of miles off, is a mob of some kind, which, from its dark colour—there being nothing white among it—and its scattered appearance, we take to be a lot of horses. This causes some little excitement among our party, many of whom would dearly like to have a gallop after them, and try to "run them in" somewhere, for there are sometimes wild mobs in this part of the plains, with unclaimed stock, or "clear skins" among them, besides, perhaps, stray horses, for which rewards are to be had—stockmen's perquisites. Horses, sure enough! They come, thirty or forty of them, thundering down towards us, in a cloud of dust, violently

exciting our nags. A quarter of a mile from us, they stop short, heads and tails up, stare and snort a moment, then some old mare anxious for her foal's safety starts away at a hand gallop, the kicking and screaming crowd take an undecided turn, then follow her at twenty miles an hour; a great black stallion, tail in air, ears laid back, and nose to the ground, whipping in the rearmost. Nelson, Trump, and Fly, three tall brindled kangaroo hounds, have followed us without orders. Some one says, "There's a warrigal!" and sure enough we see a yellow wild dog jumping up in the air to get a look at us over the tops of the low cotton bushes. The dogs have seen him too, and they are off like arrows, with their bristles up and with murder in their eyes. Warrigal canters on leisurely, thinking they are only sheep-dogs, and cannot catch him. Not until he sees our whole squadron follow the hounds, led horses and all, at full gallop, quart pots and hobble-chains clattering and rattling, does he start to run for his life. Nelson catches him in half a mile, knocks him over, receives one hard nip from the warrigal's steel-trap jaws, and has him by the throat. A savage worry; and the sheep are rid of an enemy. We cut off his brush, light our pipes, and go back to our course again.

The sun is setting in a glory of coloured fire, illuminating the distant river timber we have left behind us, and the expanse of plain between us and it, with violet light, in which all distant objects seem strangely near and distinct. The clump of forest oak marking the water-hole where we mean to camp to-night is plainly in sight, from the high ground to the south of the desolate fifteen-mile swamp, when our friend Jim, whose colt has been going quietly and well for the last few miles, sees a great black snake. The snake prepares for action, coiling himself up, with his head and neck erect, and flattened venomously. Jim, forgetting that he is riding a young one, drops the coils of his sixteen-foot stock-whip, prepared to smite his enemy. The colt takes fright at the trailing thong, and starts bucking viciously in a circle, of which the angry snake is the centre. Jim's nerves are pretty strong, and few horses can throw him, but he looks awfully scared this time, for he thinks that if a strap or a buckle give way, he will be thrown right on the top of the poisonous reptile. "Sit tight, Jim, or the snake will have you!" shout the laughing lookers-on, and a black boy breaks the brute's back with a cut of his whip, takes off his head, and carries him to camp, to grill for his supper. Twilight does not last long, so we start into a canter for a mile or two, and soon arrive at our camping-place: a shallow water-hole, by a clump of ragged-looking trees, near which passes the boundary line of our run. Those confounded sheep of our neighbour's have been trespassing again, and have spoilt the water in the hole with their feet.

We find a fallen tree against which to make a fire, pull off our saddles, secure our horses' fore feet with hobbles, light the fire, fill the

quart pots, range them in a row where they will boil soonest, set our saddles and saddle-cloths to dry, and pick the softest and smoothest places we can find, to windward of the fire, to lie upon. A handful of tea is thrown into each quart as it boils, and supper commences; salt beef and damper disappearing with much rapidity. The water for tea is thick with clay, the beef is hard and salt, but we enjoy our supper vastly, and are silent during its consumption, after the manner of hungry men. Then, pipes are lighted, and yarns are spun, about the marvellous performances of certain stock-horses in "cutting out" cattle, or running wild mobs; about wonderful bargains in horse-flesh, or knowing devices for circumventing rival drovers. The black boys, at a little fire of their own, are crooning their monstrous corroborry songs, or shouting with laughter at some aboriginal joke, the point of which no white man ever could make out. A supply of firewood being collected, the horses looked at, a bell attached to one or two of them, and their hobble shortened, very soon every one is asleep, each man with his head in his saddle, his feet to the fire, and his blanket drawn over his face. Now and then, some one wakes and listens. The bush is very silent at night, and the horse-bell can be heard a long way off; the only sound breaking the stillness, excepting perhaps the unearthly wailing howl of a wild dog, or the cuckoo-note of a mopek owl. Towards morning, when the night is darkest, and every one else in their soundest sleep, our energetic friend, F., whose cattle we are gathering, wakes up; he notices that the eastern stars are becoming pale, and hears the twittering of an early bird, or the scream of a cockatoo. He knows by these signs and tokens that daylight is not far off; so he pulls on his boots, throws some wood on the fire, and sings out the bush *réveillé*, "Now then, lads, turn out here; don't let the sun burn your eyes out!" Thus adjured, the white men arise and light their pipes, yawning and warming themselves at the sparkling fire. Then the quart pots are refilled for breakfast, the black boys are roused out, and the appearance of a red streak in the east is hailed by a chorus of croaks from the crows, and an insane cachinnation from a pair of laughing jackasses located in the trees near us. We swallow our breakfast in haste, and are off, bridles in hand, to find our horses. It is still dim twilight, but we know in what direction to seek them, and soon hear the bell and clink of hobble-chains; as the light brightens, we see them scattered over the plain in twos and threes, some of them a mile or more away; that notorious old rogue, "Rocket," comes jumping along towards his home at a wonderful pace, in spite of his short hobble, and followed by all the "up-the-river" nags. Archie starts after him, on the first horse he can catch, and soon brings him cantering back to camp.

By the time the red sun has shown his fiery face over the rim of the horizon, we are all mounted and ready, the spare horses are consigned

to a black boy, to be driven loose to the rendezvous, and our general, F., divides his forces, and instructs his lieutenants. "Bill, you take three or four with you, and ride down the plains until you sight the lake timber; start all the cattle you see to your right, and send some one after them to see that they don't run to the Red Hill. You fetch the cattle from the scrubs, and don't let them gallop more than you can help." I am sent in another direction, with Archie and Jim, to the Abercrombie and Wanting, for the bullocks and cows that there do congregate. F. rides away eastward with the black boys, to sweep together all the cattle that feed in that direction. Old Warry, the stock-horse, with F.'s red blanket strapped across his back, jogs off towards the rendezvous, followed in a string by the rest of our spare stud, whose services will be required later in the day. The old horse knows his way to every camp on the run, and is supposed to be a very fair judge of a bullock. Arrived at the bald red sand-hill, worn bare by thousands of hoofs, and scattered with the white skeletons of many defunct bullocks, which is the gathering-place for the many groups (or mobs) of cattle, he can see, shining white in the morning sun, for miles around. Billy-go-Nimble, the black boy, succeeds, by dint of much tact and contrivance, in catching most of his equine charges, taking off their packs, and hobbling them.

As the sun mounts higher, and the grey line of the distant river timber disappears in his glare, white moving clouds of dust begin to arise all around the horizon, merging into one another, and approaching the place where Billy sits smoking his pipe and watching the grazing horses. Soon the galloping cattle themselves become visible, as they stop and assemble for a moment on the top of some sand-hill in their course. Presently the strong leading bullocks, with dusty faces and tongues hanging out, trot on to the camp, and stand there panting, well pleased to arrive at, what they seem to consider, a haven of refuge. They are followed by a long string of horned beasts of every age, sex, and colour, the rear being brought up by a bevy of matronly old cows, their young calves staggering along beside them. Behind all, and riding in a cloud of dust, from which issue from time to time the reports of their long heavy whips, come some of the men who left us in the morning, their horses white with dust and sweat. From every quarter, more and more cattle stream on to the camp; the dust raised by the hoofs of a couple of thousand of half-wild cattle, flies in clouds; and the noise of bellowing becomes almost deafening. All our party having reassembled, we let our tired horses go, and catch and saddle the fresh ones. The work of drafting out the cattle we want to take home to the station, fat bullocks and cows for market, calves that require branding, and stock strayed from other "runs," has now to begin; and for it we have reserved the seasoned stock-horses, old staggers that know their work, and are used to

"cutting out." We send men to ride round the

main body of the cattle, and keep them on the "camp;" we cut off a few quiet cows from the rest, and drive them a quarter of a mile or so to windward of the herd, where we leave them, well in sight of the others, with a horseman in charge of them. Presently, four or five of the most experienced hands ride quietly in, among the moving parti-coloured mass, select each man his beast, and dodge them through and among the rest, until they arrive at the edge of the herd. Then, a sudden rush, and the bullock is separated from his companions; in vain he gallops, in vain he twists and dodges to regain the mob. Man and horse keep close to his quarter, between him and his mates, edging him nearer and nearer at every turn to the quiet cattle on the plain. Perhaps he wheels short round upon the horse, and tries to use his horns; but the wary nag is not to be caught, turns shorter still, and the rider's heavy stock-whip cracks hard and sharp upon the beast's hide. Out-paced and out-maneuvred, the bullock at last perceives the quiet cattle towards which the stockman is trying to drive him, cocks his ears, and trots off towards them, while the man walks his horse quietly back in search of fresh game.

It is a very lively and exciting sight. On the higher ground, half hidden by a cloud of white dust, which rises like a pillar of smoke into the bright blue sky, is a bellowing roaring assemblage of horned cattle. Wild old bullocks, wandering restlessly through the crowd, their sides ornamented with many brands and devices, their ears cut into many shapes, strike savagely with their horns at everything in their way. Anxious matronly cows bellow frantically for their calves, which run under the horses' feet, looking for their mothers. Shaggy thin-legged half-starved weaners, with a precocious look about their wizened faces, like that on the face of a London street Arab, look out for a chance to steal some milk from the mothers of more fortunate calves. Blundering young bulls and handsome sleek heifers, as yet untouched by rope or brand, and shoals of young cattle that, as though for mischief's sake, continually try to join the drafted lot where they have no business, and are hunted back by the black boys. Horsemen ride round the moving many-hued mass, from the midst of which, every now and again, the galloping beast darts out, a red-shirted stockman racing alongside him. Foiled in their efforts to re-enter the main body, the selected cattle go trotting about, with heads up, across the level space between the larger and the smaller herd. Horsemen are galloping far and near in all directions, cattle are bellowing, men shouting; all is sunshine, heat, dust, noise, and motion. The work goes on, until the sun is past the zenith, and horses and men become of one uniform dust colour.

Three hundred head or so have been cut out, and the sharp eyes of the men on the camp can find no more of the cattle they require. The horsemen gather in a group; the cattle, no longer kept together by the men who have been riding round them, draw slowly off the camp;

we all adjourn to the neighbouring swamp, in which there is still a little water left, among the polygonum bushes at the bottom of it, to give our tired horses a drink. The water is very bad, but seems delicious to us, hoarse as we are with shouting and parched with dust. Then the drafted cattle are sent home to the station: three men in charge of them, to be shut up in the stock-yard to-night, and taken out in the morning to feed under strict surveillance. The rest of us, after lighting our pipes, ride slowly off in a contrary direction, to bivouac again to-night, and renew to-morrow, on a different part of the run, the operations of to-day.

HOPE RASHLEIGH.

THERE never was a prouder nor more indulgent father than John Rashleigh. A haughty, dry, and saturnine man, with few weaknesses and fewer affections; all the tenderness of his nature having concentrated itself on his daughter. The love which had been only partially bestowed upon the wife was lavished on the child with an excess that knew no bounds.

It was unfortunate for Hope that she was left motherless at the very time when maternal care and guidance were most needed. A wilful, high-spirited girl, clever, beautiful, and perilously fascinating, ran but a poor chance of coming to good, without some firm hand to guide and govern her; but when she was just thirteen Mrs. Rashleigh died, and Hope was given up to the worst training a girl can have — the over-indulgence of a father. Father, servants, masters (when she chose to accept lessons, which she did sometimes out of the weariness of idleness), the half housekeeper, half companion, bowed to her. No one was found to oppose her; even Grantley Watts put himself under her feet with the rest, and thought himself honoured if she condescended to treat him like a slave, made him fetch and carry and work for her, and attend upon her every whim and caprice. She never thanked him, and she rarely rewarded him even with a smile; though sometimes she did; and then he forgot all but that smile, and thought himself richer than many a king standing on the threshold of his treasure-chamber.

Hope and Grantley Watts were cousins of a far-away kind; though he was that most miserable of all things — a poor relation brought up on charity, therefore in no wise her equal according to the canons of society. Still, the equality of blood was between them however great the inequality of means; and the equality of nature as well; save that the balance of nobleness hung to Grantley's side, who had been spared the dangers which beset a spoiled and pampered child, and whose virtues therefore had a better chance and freer room for growth.

He was a fine, manly, noble-hearted fellow this Grantley, with two special characteristics, good temper and an invincible sense of honour.

His cousin, John Rashleigh, was substantially kind to him. He housed him, and had educated him liberally; but for the more immaterial kindnesses of tender look or gracious word, of indulgences granted by the generosity of love, of gifts or pleasures beyond strict deserving, the boy had grown up absolutely without them. Hope, too, had used towards him all the insolence which girls of a certain type are so fond of showing towards young men, no matter what their degree; adding to this haughtiness the tyranny and domination to which every one within her sphere was forced to submit. But Grantley accepted all her girlish impertinences with unwavering good humour and that patience of the stronger which is so large and calm; never seeming to see what would have fired many another youth to saucy retaliation, but, always master of himself, returning good for evil, smiles for jeers, obedience for command, and service for ingratitude. And yet he was not mean spirited.

Hope was now seventeen—Grantley two years older. She was a tall, slight, fair girl, with dark eyes to which straight brows and long lashes gave a mingled expression of fire and softness; her hair, which waved in broad undulations and was of a pure golden brown, was thrown back from her face and left loose and wandering about her neck; her lips were full and finely curved; but the general tone of her face and manners altogether was that of pride and self will, with an underflow of loving warmth if it could but be reached. As yet no one had reached it save her father, and even he was not loved in proportion to the love he gave, as is the sorrowful law of life. The universal feeling in the neighbourhood where she lived was, that Miss Hope Rashleigh wanted her master, and that a little stiff tribulation would be the making of her.

Hope had one quality which counted much in the blotting out of her sins: she was generous. In this she went beyond her father by many degrees, for he was only just, and when he was more than just he was proud and bestowed from ostentation rather than from generosity—as a duty owing to his own dignity and condition, not as the duty of kindliness to others. She, on the contrary, gave from the affluence of her nature, because making presents was a pleasure in itself, and alleviating suffering her instinct. No one who came to her was ever sent away empty handed; and if she was more than usually exacting and impatient with her servants, she healed their wounds so liberally that they all said "a bad day with Miss Hope was equal to a month's wages any time."

This was the only point on which her father ever checked her. He made her a liberal allowance, more than sufficient for her own wants had they been double what they were; but as she was for ever behindhand, owing to her bounties, he had to make up her deficiencies at the end of the quarter; vowing that this should be the last time, and that he must positively, for her own sake, let her learn the value

of money. But the last time had never come yet.

At last Grantley's was offered an Indian appointment, which, though of small value in the beginning, promised well, and was sure to lead to a favourable future if he were found capable and steady. There was no question of doubt or hesitation in the matter; he must go, willing or unwilling. Penniless young men, kept long idle at home, are generally glad enough of good appointments where they can make their fortunes: but his cousin noticed that he turned deadly pale as he spoke, and Hope caught a look such as she had never seen in his eyes before, and which sent all the blood in a thick wave of mingled passions round her heart.

A few days before Grantley's departure, Hope was walking in the shrubbery by the long field. She had been rather dull of late. Hope Rashleigh could get out of temper. Presently, up the long path where she was walking came Grantley with his gun and his game-bag. He, too, was dull. Glad and grateful as he was for that Indian appointment, he had never been quite himself since it had been made; though his gravity and preoccupation were perhaps only natural in a thoughtful youth on the eve of entering the world on his own account, and with all his future depending on himself alone. As he came nearer, Hope raised her eyes from the book she had been reading; at least not exactly reading, since she was holding it upside down; and as she looked she coloured.

"I am going to get you a partridge, Miss Hope," said Grantley, stopping for a moment as he came near to her. He always called her Miss Hope.

"I dare say the partridges will be safe enough from your gun," said Hope, insolently. But she did not look at him as she spoke; and somehow her insolence seemed a little put on and forced.

"Oh! that is scarcely fair," said Grantley, smiling. "I may be good for very little, Miss Hope, but I am a pretty fair shot."

"At least you say so of yourself. I never believe boasters," answered Hope, carelessly.

"Is knowing an insignificant thing like this, a bit of skill which any one can attain by practice—and not being proud of it, boasting?" Grantley asked, gently.

"I do not condescend to argue with you," cried Hope, shaking back her hair. "You are very rude to contradict me."

"I do not wish to contradict you, Miss Hope," replied Grantley, in a sweet grave voice; "but you must not think me rude because I do not like you to have a mean opinion of me, and try to set you right."

The blood rushed over Hope's face, and she turned away abruptly.

"I am going away—perhaps for ever," then said Grantley after a short pause, speaking in a low voice but not looking at his cousin—looking down instead, occupied about the stock of his gun which just then needed an extra polish;

"and I should like to ask you one question before I go—may I?"

"I suppose my permission or refusal would not count for much if you have made up your mind," said Hope, she too looking down, folding the leaves of her book a little unconsciously.

"I think it would, Miss Hope. I think I have always been careful to obey your every wish, so far as I could; and I have never wilfully displeased you, believe me."

"It is a pity, then, that you should have done it so often without your will," said Hope.

"That is just what I want to ask," replied Grantley. "Why have you been so constantly displeased with me, Miss Hope? No one has tried more earnestly than I to please and obey you—I can truly say from the very first years of my life here—why is it, then, that you hate me as you do? What have I ever done to make you hate me? If I only knew! if I only had known for all these years!"

"Hate you?" she cried quickly, turning full round upon him and raising her eyes with a strange look into his face. Then she dropped them again, and said coldly, "I did not know, Mr. Watts, that I had ever honoured you enough to hate you. I have scarcely taken so much notice of you as to warrant you in saying that."

Grantley turned pale. "Forgive me," she said, sadly; "this has been again one of my unlucky blunders."

"I think," she said, with a gentler look than usual, "we might as well drop this conversation. I do not see to what good it can possibly lead; and giving offence and then making apologies has always seemed to me a very childish way of passing the time; and we are not children now," she continued, with girlish pride. "It has not been your fault, Grantley, if you have been tiresome and disagreeable." But as she looked up when she said this, and smiled all radiantly and sweetly, the words had no sting in them, and were indeed more coaxing than impertinent. "I dare say you have not meant to be unpleasant, and so I have forgiven you. But you had better go now and look after the partridges. I promise you, if you get one, to take it specially to myself; and I am sure that will be honour enough!" And she laughed one of her sweet, clear, precious laughs, as rare as precious, which most people—and Grantley among them—prized as much as they would have prized the loving favour of a queen.

"Ah, Miss Hope!" he said very tenderly, his handsome face, bronzed and flushed, looking down upon her with such infinite love and admiration, "you have too much power over your fellow-creatures. It is good neither for you nor for them."

"It is very good for both them and me," she said. "It keeps them in their proper places, and makes me able to—" She hesitated.

"To what?" said Grantley, coming a step nearer.

"To keep mine," she answered coldly, drawing herself away.

He sighed, and seemed to wake as from a dream. "Well, I must go," he then said. "Good-by, Miss Hope; I will get you a bird if I can; and remember that you have promised to accept it specially for yourself."

"You need not give yourself the trouble," she answered disdainfully; she, too, seeming to shake herself clear from a pleasant dream. "I have not the slightest wish that you should get me one, Mr. Watts, or indeed that you should think of me at all." Saying which she walked away, and left him without another word.

He looked after her as she slowly disappeared, and then he struck off into the fields for one of the last days of partridge shooting he was to have in the old country. But Hope, going deeper into the shrubbery, flung herself down on the moss at the roots of the trees and burst into a passionate flood of tears, hating and despising herself the while.

When Grantley returned in the evening he had only one bird in his bag; though game was plentiful this year and he was acknowledged to be a first-rate shot. His cousin, John Rashleigh, rallied him unmercifully, and Hope said in her most disdainful way: "I thought the coveys would be tolerably safe, Mr. Watts!" But he only laughed, and admitted that he was a muff and not worth his salt—that powder and shot were thrown away upon him—and that he would make but a sorry figure in India where men *could* shoot—with other jeerings playful or bitter as they might be; simply saying, "Well, Miss Hope, you must have it some morning for breakfast when I am gone; it is the last I shall shoot, and I should like you to have it."

To which answered Hope indifferently: "You are very good, Grantley, but I dare say Fido will be the only one to benefit by your last bag; I do not suppose I shall even see the creature."

Grantley coloured; and Mr. Rashleigh himself thought she might have been more gracious just on the eve of the poor lad's departure, when perhaps they might never see him again; and after all, though he was a poor relation, and had very properly never forgotten that, or gone beyond the strictest line of demarcation, yet he had been many years in the house now, and Hope was very young when he came, so that if she had even considered him almost as a brother, no great harm would have been done; and so on; his heart unconsciously pleading against his child's untoward pride in favour of his dependent.

Perhaps it was some such half discomfort—it could not be said to be conscious displeasure—that made him refuse Hope's request that evening. As usual, she was out of funds; and she had a special need for money at this moment. She wished to help poor Anne Rogers down in the fever, with her husband in the hospital, and her children destitute, and she knew that her father would not give them a penny; for the man had been convicted of poaching, and Anne herself did not bear the most un-

blemished character, and had seen the inside of the county jail more than once in her lifetime. But these counter-pleadings did not influence Hope; and she thought only of the suffering family, which she could help, and would, if she had the money. Then she wanted to make Grantley a present before he went away, and she did not want her father to know of it; though perhaps she would have been puzzled to explain why she wished to keep such a trivial matter secret. She had never given him anything, not even a flower, not even a book; and he was almost the only person within her sphere so passed over; but now, when he was going to leave for ever, she would give him something as a remembrance—something that would make him think of her when he was away. Poor, proud Hope, come then at last to this!

She knew that her father had money in the house, when she went into the library to speak to him; for she saw him put a twenty-pound note in his desk yesterday, which was just the sum she wanted, and indeed was on the point of asking for then. She would have got it had she done so; but to-day the vane had shifted, and for the first time in his life he refused her, and so sternly and positively, that, as much in surprise as anger, she gave up the point at once. But with a sullen flush of pride and determination on her face, which he did not see, sitting as he was towards the light while she stood in the shadow. And then she left the room in stately silence; too proud to coax even her father after a refusal so harshly made; though, had she coaxed him as Hope could when she chose, the whole thing would have been at an end, and John Rashleigh would have yielded. She was but a spoiled child, remember, whose faults had been fostered by the injudicious training of her life.

The distress of poor Anne Rogers pressed upon her. Unused to opposition and in a mood more than ordinarily excitable, everything became exaggerated, and she laid awake through the night in a state bordering upon mania, feeling herself to be a coward and a murderer in not executing the righteousness of will, and taking from her father what he would not but ought to freely give. Was not humanity before mere obedience? Was she to let a fellow-creature die rather than take what could be spared so well, and what she had the right to demand? Yes, by right; her father's money was hers as well, if not by law yet by moral justice, and if he made a cold and churlish steward, it was her duty to supply his defects, and to let the poor benefit by his superfluities. All the wild reasonings of a wilful mind aiding the impulses of a generous heart passed through her brain that night, and when she rose in the morning it was with the determination to do her own will, and defy her father's.

John Rashleigh was a magistrate, and to-day was market-day at Canstow, the town near which they lived, where the magistrates always assembled in the upper room of the town-hall and

dispensed law, if not justice, on the offenders. His absence gave Hope the opportunity she wanted. Very quietly and very deliberately she unlocked his desk, and took from it the twenty-pound note. But though the act was shameful, she had no perception that she was doing wrong, beyond the consciousness of self-will and disobedience, which did not trouble her much—which, on the contrary, she had reasoned herself into considering the meritorious exercise of a better judgment and a nobler motive.

"Grantley, change this for me," she said, giving him the note.

"I cannot change it myself, Miss Hope," he answered, "but I will get it done for you in Canstow; I am going over there directly."

"Change it where you like," she answered carelessly. "I want the money as soon as you can give it to me, that is all; and Grantley, do you hear? if papa asks you, do not tell him that I gave you the note to get changed."

"Very well, I will not," said Grantley, who, suspecting nothing wrong saw nothing odd in her request; and who indeed felt not a little flattered that she should have made a secret with him on any matter. So, full of pleasant feeling, he rode over to Canstow, where he changed the note, and bought various things with the money, partly for Hope according to her orders, and partly for himself; not at Hope's charge it must be understood, the squaring of accounts having to come afterwards. And among other things, he bought a certain camp apparatus for himself at Tell's the ironmonger's, for which he paid with the note in question—that being the largest shop and the largest purchase.

Now it so happened that Mr. Rashleigh went to pay his bill at this same ironmonger's to-day. He took a cheque which he had just received in the market-place from one of his tenants who owed him half a year's rent for his farm; and to save himself the trouble of going to the bank—banking hours indeed being over—he gave it to Tell, receiving the surplus change. Among which change came his own twenty-pound note. Passing it through his fingers, and looking at the number to take down in his pocket-book, he recognised it as that left in his desk at Newlands. He knew the number, and a certain private mark which he always made on his bank-notes, thereby rendering them doubly "branded;" and he knew that no one could have obtained possession of it lawfully.

"Where did you get this, Tell?" he asked.

"Mr. Grantley, sir," said Tell. "He changed it here not half an hour ago, and ordered this patent camp apparatus," showing the young man's purchase.

"Mr. Grantley Watts?" cried John Rashleigh, flushing up; "he changed this note here?"

"Yes, sir; I hope no mistake, sir—nothing wrong?" asked the ironmonger, a little anxiously.

"No, no, nothing! I was surprised, that was all; no, Tell, nothing wrong."

But his face was more truthful than his lips ; and Tell saw plainly that something was very far wrong in spite of his denial, and that young Mr. Grantley was in for it, whatever he had been doing. He did not suspect anything very bad. Canstow was by no means an immaculate place, and there were offences and offenders enough as times went ; but it was not to be supposed that a young gentleman like Mr. Watts had stolen a bank-note out of his cousin's drawer. Young gentlemen living in grand houses do not do such things ; crime passes them by somehow ; and the police exercise their functions very much in proportion to the yearly income. The utmost the man imagined was that Grantley had broken into a sum which Mr. Rashleigh had desired him to keep intact ; and, as it was well known that the master of Newlands had a high temper of his own and liked to be obeyed, that was quite enough to put him out, and to make his face grow so white and his thin lips so pale. At all events, wherever the fault lay, the lad was in for it, thought Tell ; not without a kindly feeling of regret for the evil hour at hand. For Grantley was a general favourite in Canstow, and most people there wished him well.

Home came John Rashleigh in a frame of mind more easily imagined than described. Things had gone crossly with him for the last few hours ; and John Rashleigh was not the man to bear with the crossness of circumstance patiently. Hope's extravagance had annoyed him ; partly because some other of his money matters had gone wrong at the same time ; and, like most proud men, the merest suspicion of possible embarrassment galled him terribly ; then he was sorry at Grantley's leaving, and vexed with himself for being sorry ; for what better could poor relation do ? and if he had made himself useful, so that he, John Rashleigh of Newlands, felt that he should be "quite lost" without him, why, that was only the lad's duty and what ought to have been, and he was worse than absurd to feel the least pain at his going. Then the magistrate's business had been worrying him to-day ; and he had been on one side of an opinion and his brothers had been on the other, and he had been forced to give in ; which had annoyed him not a little ; so that, when added to all this accumulation of disturbing influences was the sudden conviction that he had been robbed, and that too by the boy he had loved and cherished more than he had ever openly acknowledged, we can understand in what a whirlwind of fiery wrath he rode full speed through Canstow and up to Newlands, not ten minutes after Grantley had returned.

"Grantley !" he called out as soon as he entered, and still standing in the hall ; "Grantley Watts, where are you ?"

"Here, sir," said Grantley coming out of the drawing-room, where he had been giving Hope an account of his proceedings, and emptying his pockets of her commissions.

"Where did you get that twenty-pound note

you changed just now at Tell's ?" shouted John Rashleigh.

Grantley was silent.

"Come, sir, I want an answer !" cried his cousin. "Looking down and keeping a demure silence will not suit me ; I want a simple answer to a straightforward question. Where did you get that twenty-pound note from ? I left it in my desk when I went to Canstow to-day, and my desk was locked ; whoever got it forced the lock or opened it with a false key. It was either you or some one else. Who was it, Grantley ?"

Grantley still made no answer ; the truth was beginning to break upon him.

"I do not think any one in my household would do such a thing ; two hours ago I should not have thought that *you* would have done it ; and even yet, suspicious as the whole circumstance is, even yet I will accept any explanation that will clear you, else I must hold you responsible for the theft."

"I did not steal it. I have committed no theft," said Grantley, looking straight into his cousin's eyes.

"Oh ! you may dislike the word, but that I do not care for," said Mr. Rashleigh, disdainfully. "I have always remarked that people shrink more from a word than a deed, and think themselves especially ill-used if called by the name of their crime. If you are not a thief, what are you then ? If you did not steal it, how did you get it ?"

"I did not steal it," was all that Grantley could say, repeating himself monotonously.

John Rashleigh was an impatient man as well as a proud and high-tempered one. At Grantley's second asseveration he raised his hand and struck the youth across the face.

"Coward !" he said, "have you not even the bad courage of crime ? Dare you not confess what, by confession, would have been only a fault ? If you had told me frankly how and why you had come to do such a thing, I could have understood it as a boyish liberty, and have forgiven it, but now I have only one way of dealing with it—as a crime."

When he struck him Grantley involuntarily raised his own hand ; but a thought came across him, and he retreated a step or two and dropped his guard.

"It takes the remembrance of all you have done for me, Mr. Rashleigh, and more than even this, to make me able to bear your insults !" he said, excitedly, his boyish face convulsed with contending passions.

His voice, harsh and broken as it was, had somehow a different ring in it to that of guilt, and Mr. Rashleigh had not been a magistrate for so many years, and accustomed to all shades of criminals, not to know something of the human voice, and what it betokened under accusation. Grantley's startled him—so did the proud flushed face with the honest eyes looking so frankly, and the indignation rather than fear upon it—and made him half afraid that he had been too hasty. But men

of his character do not long doubt themselves for good or evil; and while that one broad fact remained unexplained—how did Grantley get possession of money left locked up in his desk?—he was in his right to suppose that he had stolen it, and common sense and the law were on his side.

“Tell me how you came by it,” he then said in a somewhat gentler tone; “if I have done you wrong, boy, I am sorry for it, and we will not bear malice; but tell me how you got that note.”

“I cannot, sir,” said Grantley, his heart swelling.

“You will not, you mean, you young fool!” said Mr. Rashleigh, contemptuously.

“I cannot,” he repeated.

“Then you will not be surprised if I send for the police? Here, Lewis. Lewis! come here! The thing must be thoroughly sifted, Grantley; and if you are guilty I am sorry for the exposure you have brought on yourself. It is your own folly to let things come to such a pass, when they can never be mended again!”

“To send for the police will not make matters much worse for me,” replied Grantley; “the servants have heard all that has passed, and my character will be none the blacker now for a public charge.”

“At least we shall get to the truth then,” said Mr. Rashleigh; “which will be so much gained.”

“No, sir,” Grantley replied, firmly, “I shall not tell you even then where I got that money from, or how I came by it!”

All this while the drawing-room door had been standing half open, with Hope close to it, listening to what was passing. A whole world of feelings had possessed her by turns—fear of her father, fear for Grantley, and shame at the false position in which her self-will and cowardice together had placed him—something, too, that was more than admiration at the constancy with which he had borne such pain and indignity that he might keep faith with her, and a kind of dawning idea that what she had done had been after all a sin and a dishonour, and that confession would degrade her for ever—all these thoughts and feelings passed through her mind by turns, and held her motionless and silent; with ever the bitter recollection that Grantley was but a poor relation at the best, and that the distance between them was immeasurable, running like a sorrowful refrain to each. But when her father spoke of giving him in charge, and called to the servant, then she hesitated no longer. Throwing the door wide open she came out into the hall.

“I took the money, papa,” she said boldly; and as she spoke she laid her hand in Grantley’s, the first time that she had ever willingly done so.

“Hope!” exclaimed her father, “are you mad? You took that money? You?”

“Yes, papa,” she answered quite steadily; “you refused to give it to me when I asked you for it yesterday, and I took it this morning.

I wanted it, and you ought to have given it to me.”

“If I had thought that to refuse it would have made you capable of stealing it, Hope, I would not have hesitated a moment,” said the father, sternly.

“I do not call it stealing,” said Hope, defiantly. “It was only taking what I had a right to. I unlocked your desk with my own key, and gave the note to Grantley to get changed.”

John Rashleigh turned fiercely against the youth. “How dare you, sir, abet my child in her folly?” he exclaimed, passionately. “What was folly in her, and excusable, considering how I have always humoured her and acceded to her wishes, and remembering that after all she is a mere child still, was downright wickedness and dishonour in you. And how do I know but that you instigated her to it? How do I know but that it was your doing in reality, and she but the innocent tool of your cunning schemes? You bought a precious gimmerack for yourself, and paid for it with my money. I tell you, Grantley, the whole thing looks too black yet for your whitewashing.”

“Grantley accounted to me for that camp thing,” said Hope. “Do I not tell you, papa, that it was my own doing from first to last? Grantley did not know where I got the note from. I only asked him to get it cashed for me. But I asked him not to tell you that I had done so, because I was afraid you would be angry with me, and I meant to tell you when you were kind again.” This she said coaxingly.

“I could not break my word to Miss Hope,” said Grantley in a low voice, but firmly. “Yet I should have thought, Mr. Rashleigh, that you would have known me too well to have suspected me of such a thing as this. What Miss Hope had the right to do was another matter, but it would have been a theft in me; and men” (here Mr. Rashleigh smiled a little satirically) “do not become thieves all at once. Yet I do not think you have ever seen much want of honour in me!”

“I will not have that tone taken,” said Mr. Rashleigh, harshly. “You have done ill, Grantley, and it is absurd to attempt to give yourself the airs of injured innocence, and as if you had the right to blame me because I suspected what was so entirely suspicious. And what do I know yet? I have no proof; only your own word and Hope’s assertion, which, for aught I know, may be merely her generous desire to get you out of a perilous position by taking the blame on herself. I can scarcely believe her guilty. To have gone into my room in my absence—unlock my desk—take the money I had refused her only a few hours ago—to steal—I cannot believe it! I will not! You have been at the bottom of it, Grantley; you have had some hand in it!”

“Now, papa, how can you go on so?” cried Hope, thoroughly frightened. “Do I not tell you that Grantley is innocent, and that I have been the only one to blame? What more can I say to convince you?”

"It is not an easy matter to convince me that my child has committed a theft," said John Rashleigh, gravely, and turning away his head.

"I did not think of it as a fault at the time, dear papa," she cried, flinging herself into his arms. "I wanted it for poor Anne Rogers, chiefly; I did not want it for myself. Forgive me, dear, dearest papa, for having been so disobedient and wilful, and do not blame or accuse Grantley any more! I am the only one to blame, and he has been far nobler than I deserved." Here she burst into tears, and buried her face in her father's breast. "Won't you forgive me, dear papa?" she sobbed again after a short pause, kissing his cheek which her tears made almost as wet as her own.

John Rashleigh could not resist this. Hope had never yet been unforgiven even when she had not shown contrition, and the unusual softness of her mood to-day could meet with nothing but the most fervent response.

"Do not cry, Hope! Dry your eyes, child!" he said, tenderly. "There, there! Let us have no more about it. I quite believe you, and I quite believe that you did not know you were doing anything wrong, and that you were only thoughtless and impulsive, as usual. And as for you, boy" (to Grantley), "I am sorry that I accused you so hastily; so, shake hands, and think no more about it. You cannot expect me to say more than that I am sorry," he added pleasantly, as Grantley still hesitated. The blow on his cheek yet stung, and it was rather early days to take the hand which had struck him. "No gentleman can want more than an apology, and a father can only express his regret to a son; so shake hands, boy, and let us all forget what has been a very painful misunderstanding."

That word did what the feeling had failed to do. Grantley grasped his cousin's hand warmly; he had conquered all his boyish pride and manly indignation by the simple name of father.

"I have made you suffer, Grantley," said Hope, as her father left them; and again she laid her hand in his.

"I would have borne more than this for your sake, Miss Hope," he answered, pressing her hand between both of his, and looking at her lovingly—she not haughty and disdainful as usual, but downcast, bashful, and repentant.

"I do not know what we shall do without you, Grantley," she then said very gently; and as she spoke she turned pale, and he felt her hand trembling in his.

"Oh! you will soon forget me. I have so often displeased you, you will be glad to get rid of me," Grantley answered.

"I do not think we shall," said Hope, in a low voice. And then there was a moment's silence.

All this time they were standing with their hands clasped in each other's in the hall which had just been so noisy and heated with the late storm passing through.

"You have not displeased me; it is I who have been ill tempered," Hope continued, in a still lower voice, still softer and richer in its tones. "I ought to ask you for forgiveness, Grantley, before you go, for I have often behaved so badly to you."

"You must not do that," he exclaimed hastily, and his eyes filled up with tears. "I could not bear that, Miss Hope. I cannot bear to hear you even blame yourself for anything."

"Grantley!" she said; and then she stopped and said no more.

Still with her hand in his, still looking down on her as she stood with bent head and lowered eyelids before him, he drew just a shade nearer to her.

"You spoke?" he asked.

She laid her other hand on his arm.

"I am much obliged to you for all that you have done for me these many years," she said, almost in a whisper.

The words were formal but the voice and tone were not; the downcast eyes, the parted lips, the cheeks now crimsoning and now paleing, the heaving breast, the pride swept away beneath the swell of this unusual tenderness and girlish gratitude, all told of something deeper and warmer stirring in that impetuous heart than what those quaint, formal words expressed.

"Do not say that you are obliged to me for anything, dear Miss Hope," said Grantley, himself scarcely able to speak; "it has been honour enough to me to be allowed to serve you."

"No one has ever done so much for me," she said.

"Because no one ever . . ." He stopped in his turn, and said no more; then, after a pause, he went on: "I have done nothing for you unwillingly, Miss Hope. If you had asked me at any time to give you my life I would have done it as freely as I would have given you a flower. I have had but one object—that of serving and obeying you; and I have had but one desire—that of pleasing you. I have done the first the best way I could if I have failed in the last sadly. But I want you to remember me when I am in India," he went on to say, "and to remember me with as little dislike as you can; and I am so glad of to-day, for the last thing you will have to remember of me will be my faith to you."

The tears were swelling in her eyes, as in his.

"I shall never forget to-day," she said gently, "nor how good you have always been to me, dear Grantley."

"I am glad you can say that, dear Miss Hope. I am glad I am going to India too, though I shall never see you again; for if I stayed in England I should only fall out of favour again, and then I should have the pain of seeing you hate me more than ever, perhaps."

By this time the tears were running down her face.

"I have never disliked you, Grantley," she said; "I have pretended to do so, but it was

mere pretence; and I have tried, but I could not. I like you better than you like me, Grantley—a great deal."

"Hope!"

What was it? What happened? What madness took him? Neither of them ever knew, boy and girl as they were; but Hope found herself clasped to his heart, with her arm round his neck, and their flushed, wet, youthful faces laid against each other.

But they were not in smooth water yet, and had something more formidable before them than even their own misunderstanding and childish blindness had been. Though John Rashleigh might forgive a girlish freedom like that of which Hope had been guilty, it was by no means certain that he would forgive this far graver sin. The light of his eyes and the pride of his heart, she for whom lords and princes would not have been too good, to give herself away at sixteen to a poor relation! Hope knew all the trial to be passed through. It must be met, however, and that at once, unless she and Grantley would undertake a clandestine correspondence—for which the one was too proud and the other too honest; or unless they would give up each other—which neither would hear of. What she anticipated came to pass, in even exaggerated form. The father was furious; violent beyond anything she had dreamed possible; but, girl as she was, she was firm, and Grantley would not yield her so long as she would hold to him.

Then came that terrible collision of two wills equal in strength, and the battle of love and pride which tears a man's very soul. Look which way he would, there was no comfort for John Rashleigh; and refusal or consent was equally madness and despair. But he must decide. The proud man had to balance with the father; and eventually the father won the day. Yet he would not consent to the marriage for many years even after they had come to riper age than what is generally held ripe enough; and when he did—when Grantley came back from India with a character and repute of his own, and his cousin found that both poor relation and daughter had not swerved a hair's breadth from their young loves, and were minded to marry without his consent if it could not be with—even then, when forced to yield, Grantley found his roses decidedly not without thorns. His sweetness of temper though conquered before the end came; and when John Rashleigh was dying, he confessed that Grantley had been the best son, and the dearest, father ever had; and that now, when the things of this world were slipping away from him and he was beginning to learn their emptiness, he was glad that Hope had married one who, by his better influence, had made her a nobler and a gentler woman.

"But you were a thief after all, my boy,

and stole a greater treasure than a paltry bank-note," he said lovingly, not an hour before he died.

MODERN TORTURE.

WE publish the following letter, as an act of justice. We do not observe, however, that it contradicts any statement to which this Journal has given circulation.*

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—An article headed Modern Torture appeared on the 10th of June in number 320 of All the Year Round, at page 463, being a sort of abstract of Rückel's work, entitled Sachsen Erkebung und das Zuchthaus zu Waldheim.

I trust you will be good enough to complete this article by mentioning, in your periodical, that the Saxon government has published a declaration in the official paper, the Dresden Journal, to the effect that it disdains to prosecute the author, or take any legal proceedings against his book, preferring to leave the verdict on it to the sound common sense of the Saxon people.

This individual, after having fought at the barricades against the government, whose paid servant he was at the time, was convicted for sedition, and received, through the royal grace, first his life, and, at a later period, the remission of his commuted sentence. He now seeks to make capital of his imprisonment by the publication of a sensation romance.

In conclusion, I may add that the Prussian press loudly predicted the confiscation and prohibition of the work by the Saxon government.

This confiscation and prohibition have indeed taken place in Prussia, but not in Saxony.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

E. P. DE COLQUHOUN,
Aulic Councillor of H.M. the King of Saxony.

* See page 463 of the last volume.

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